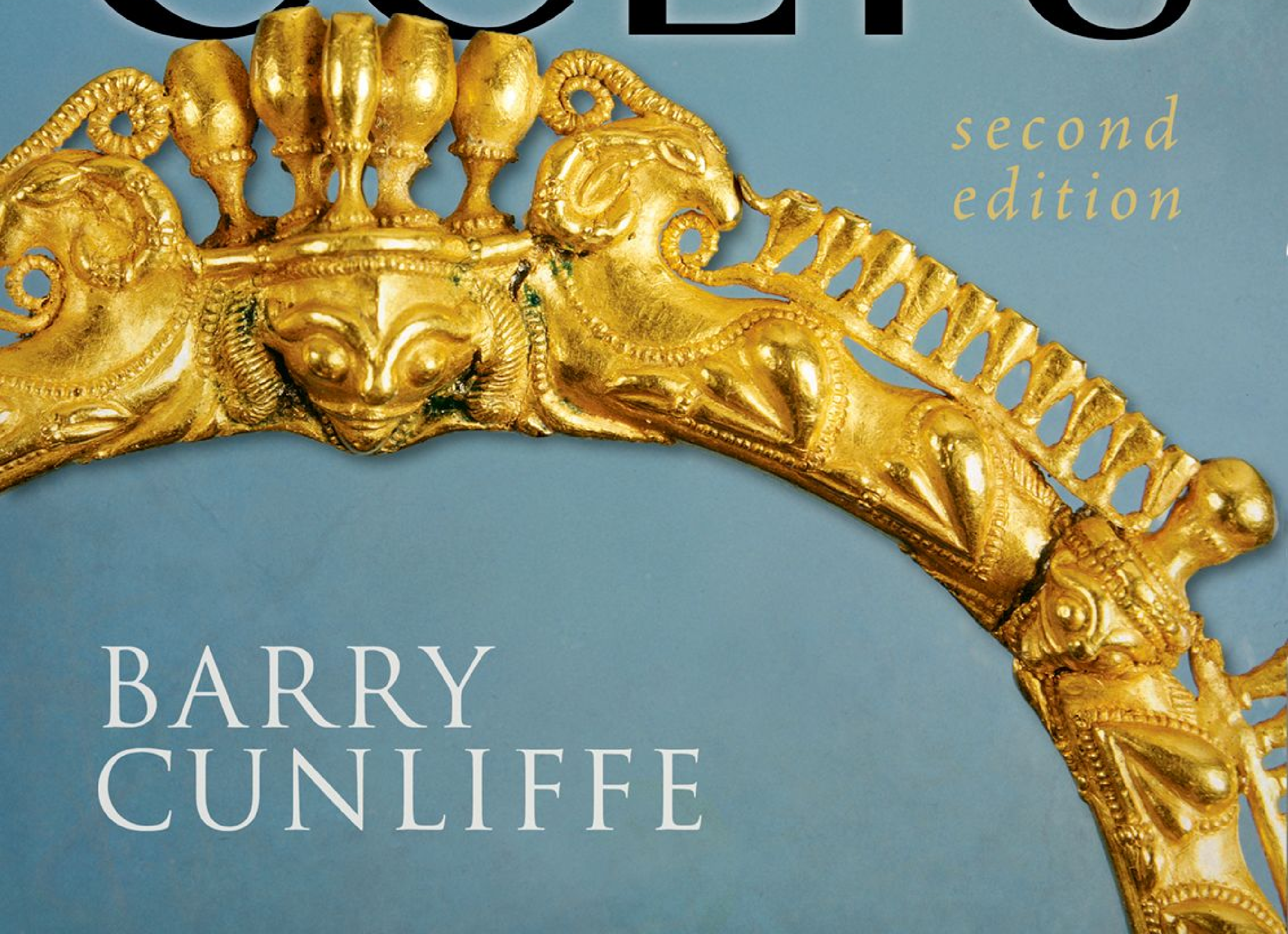
THE ANCIENT CELTS

second edition



BARRY
CUNLIFFE

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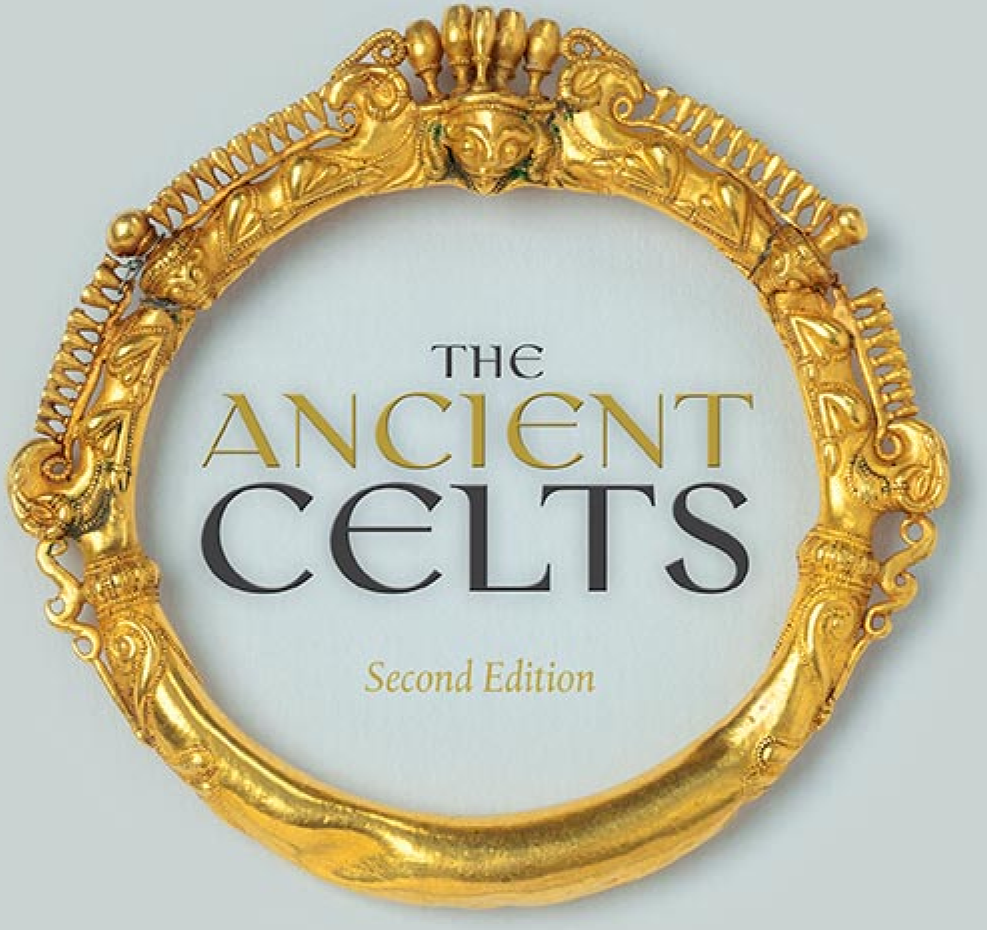

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BARRY CUNLIFFE

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Barry Cunliffe 2018

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PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

The First Edition of this book was written twenty years ago when the subject, indeed the validity, of the Celts was being actively debated. Most archaeologists were agreed that our perceptions of the ancient Celts, which had changed little over the last century, were in urgent need of revision. A certain nostalgic cosiness had crept in and although new data was accumulating fast there had been little critical debate. Old mantras about ‘Celticness’ were repeated bringing comfort rather than stimulation. In the debate that followed in the 1990s and the early years of this millennium the way in which the concept of the Celt had been constructed was energetically reassessed, old preconceptions were cast off, and new ways were developed to try to improve our understanding of the European barbarians who were referred to as Celts or Gauls by their Mediterranean neighbours.

What became clear, early in the debate, was that the models we had been using were no longer fit for purpose. They were predicated on a theory, first coherently formulated in the early eighteenth century, to explain variations in a language group to which the name ‘Celtic’ had been given. It was not until the early nineteenth century that the nascent discipline of archaeology began slowly to yield relevant data. Since philology was the senior discipline, the findings of the archaeologists were, inevitably, interpreted in terms of the linguistic model. So it was until the last decades of the twentieth century, when it began to become apparent that the archaeological evidence could no longer be forced to fit the old linguistic theories. It was in this atmosphere of new-found confidence that some archaeologists began to consider fresh models suggesting that the Celtic language may have originated in the Atlantic zone of Europe and may have spread eastwards, perhaps as early as the third millennium BC.

The discussion has continued over the last fifteen years or so, some groups trying to find a rapprochement between archaeologists and linguists. Now, with the development of new techniques to extract ancient DNA from human bones, an entirely new source of data is becoming available, totally independently of archaeology and linguistics. Once sufficient ancient DNA evidence becomes available and is brought into meaningful juxtaposition with the archaeological data, reliable narratives of human mobility, exploring both connectivity and remoteness, will be able to be constructed for Europe. These will challenge linguists to look anew at their long-held theories. Out of all this the history of the people who spoke the Celtic language will emerge. These are exciting times. The exploration of the Celts, then, is a worthwhile pursuit since it draws us deep into the processes which help us to begin to understand the complexity of our past.

Barry Cunliffe
Oxford
December 2017

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

For two and a half thousand years the Celts have continued to fascinate those who have come into contact with them. For the Greeks and Romans the fascination was tinged with fear tempered with a degree of respect for Celtic prowess in battle. Later generations, further removed from the reality of the barbarian Celts of the first millennium BC, generated their own myths and stereotypes about the past, re-creating Celtic ancestors for themselves in the image of the day designed to explain their own attitudes and aspirations and to provide a legitimacy for actions. The study of the Celts and of our changing visions of them offer an incomparable insight into the human need to establish an identity—and of the difficulties which this poses to archaeologists, who, by their best endeavours, attempt to remain objective.

It could be argued that biased historical anecdotes, ill-understood patterns of early language development, and hard archaeological ‘facts’—the artefacts, ecofacts, and structures of the past recovered through excavation—should not, and indeed cannot, be brought together to create a coherent picture of the past. The position is firmly taken by some and energetically argued; it is not one with which I have much sympathy. Given an array of disparate evidence, we would, I believe, be failing if we were to fight shy of the challenges posed by using every available scrap in our attempt to construct a European protohistory. In doing so we will, inevitably, be drawn into simplification and generalization, laying ourselves open to criticism from the purists, but better the attempt to create a whole, however imperfect, than to be satisfied with the minute examination of only a part.

In writing this book, within the entirely reasonable constraints suggested by the publishers, I have found it impossible to go into areas of detail which I would like to have covered, while at the same time being drawn into the wider themes of European pre- and protohistory. Rather than adhere to the preconceptions of my original plan, I have allowed myself to be led by the subject. What emerges is much less an ‘archaeology’ than it might have been.

My other indulgence is to have written the text during a sabbatical term living in a house on the north coast of Brittany, overlooking a narrow bay to the headland of Le Yaudet beyond. In the Late Iron Age, the promontory was defended by a massive rampart, and it is quite conceivable, though yet unproven, that it was one of the communities attacked by Caesar in 56 BC. Living here in Brittany has provided a constant reminder of the Celtic world. In the nearby church at Loguivy-lès-Lannion we attended a musical celebration for the pardon of St Ivy. The long address of welcome was in Breton. Then followed music and singing dominated by bagpipes and bombardes identical to those played by the shepherds in the Adoration depicted on the seventeenth-century altarpiece above. Two months later, in July, the local fÃªte folklorique was held within the promontory fort of Le Yaudet. The event is an entirely new creation only some ten years old, but it is fast becoming a focus for the community. The displays of old farm machinery and ancient crafts are as fascinating to the local population as they are to the tourists, and in the evening, as dinner in the open air proceeds, old and young alike join in the singing of Breton songs and the dancing, and listen to the telling of stories. It is, of course, a conscious re-creation of a past, but a past not long gone and one which offers a much-needed sense of identity and continuity in a fast-changing world.

The archaeology of Le Yaudet, the Breton language still spoken, and the underlying sense of a Celtic ethnicity are aspects of the phenomenon of the Celts: in their coherence and disparity they provide a leitmotiv for the book to follow.

Finally a few acknowledgements: to the editorial and design departments of Oxford University Press for their help and advice throughout; to the many individuals and institutions who provided photographs; to Alison Wilkins for producing a new series of line drawings; to Lynda Smithson for preparing the text; and to my family for their forbearance and understanding with my mild obsession.

Barry Cunliffe
Pont Roux
January 1996

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1

Visions of the Celts

In a famous lecture given more than half a century ago, the Oxford scholar J. R. R. Tolkien chided his audience, mostly comprised of Celtic specialists, by claiming '"(Celtic)" of any sort is . . . a magic bag, into which anything may be put, and out of which almost anything may come. . . . Anything is possible in the fabulous Celtic twilight, which is not so much a twilight of the gods as of the reason.' He was specifically referring to linguistic etymologies, but his words were true for Celtic studies in general, which, after nearly three hundred years of introspection, had created a tissue of self-sustaining myths far removed from the reality of the available data. By throwing into the 'magic bag' scraps gleaned from linguistics, classical sources, vernacular literature, archaeology, and art history, and seasoning the mix with a dash of nationalism and no small amount of wishful thinking, there emerged resplendent the image of the Celt, an image fashioned by the needs and aspirations of those who created it.

When Tolkien's lecture was published in the early 1960s, archaeologists were already beginning to feel uncomfortable with the generalized concept of Celtic society then broadly accepted, and in particular with some of the invasionist theories inherent in the traditional narrative. Indeed, some believed that the terms 'Celt' and 'Celtic' should be avoided altogether because they had led to distortions in the way the archaeological record was interpreted and presented. One writer regarded 'the Ancient Celts of Britain and Ireland' as a 'bogus and recent invention'.

Behind these early Celtosceptic debates lurked an entirely different question: when and where did the Celtic language originate? The traditional view of Celtic origins was that Celtic 'culture' emerged in the early first millennium BC, towards the end of the Late Bronze Age, in west central Europe, the implication being that the language developed at the same time, and that it was from this homeland Celtic language and culture spread south, east, and west to encompass much of the European peninsula. In the 1990s an alternative hypothesis began to be considered: that the language developed much earlier in the Atlantic zone perhaps as a lingua franca and spread eastwards into west and central Europe during a period of mobility characterized by the Beaker phenomenon in the middle of the third millennium. The debate is still continuing and these are questions to which we will return (pp. 58–63).

The subject of the ancient Celts, then, is one that generates much lively discussion. In this chapter we will consider how the concept of the Celt has come into being and how it has changed over the last two and a half thousand years.

Classical Sources and Archaeology

The first reference to the Celts in Europe is found in the work of the Greek geographer Hecataeus of Miletus, writing at the end of the sixth century BC. Thereafter the Celts are mentioned with increasing frequency by Greek and Roman writers. Without their descriptions and speculations our understanding of the Celts—the Iron Age communities of central and western Europe—would be very different. Alone, the mute archaeological evidence would allow us to sketch a warrior society focused in west central Europe, its aristocracy demonstrating its prowess through elaborately equipped burials. Over the period from the eighth to the fifth century different ways of displaying status were introduced. We would be able to recognize growing links with classical cultures of the western Mediterranean, reaching a new intensity in the period from the mid-sixth to the mid-fifth century BC, after which local schools of fine metalwork, using concepts and techniques learned partly from the Mediterranean world, developed to serve the elite.

The archaeological evidence would amply demonstrate the emergence of a more warlike society by the fourth century whose values and technology, reflected in the material culture recovered from cemeteries, spread across much of Europe, from northern France to Romania and from Poland to the Po valley. Towards the end of the second century and throughout the first, in the decades preceding the Roman expansion we would observe an intensification in production and exchange over much of the central area, focusing on large nucleated settlements, many of them defended, which were beginning to appear at this time.

If we stood back and took a broader geographical perspective, it would become immediately clear that at any one time there was considerable cultural variation from one area to another: we would be able to identify core zones of innovation and intensification, and peripheries in which these developments were reflected with decreasing clarity as distance from the core increased.

What we would *not* be able to appreciate with any degree of certainty is the long period of conflict between the Celtic communities of the Po valley and the Roman world; and we would be largely ignorant of the violent raids of the Celts deep into Greece in the third century BC and of the large-scale migrations of communities from the Middle Danube into the heart of Asia Minor which followed. Nor would we have in our minds visions of white-robed Druids cutting mistletoe with golden sickles when the moon was just at the right stage of its cycle, or of harsh-voiced warrior queens with waist-length golden hair, or of feasting warriors slurping their wine through drooping moustaches while boasting outrageously of their prowess. Unlike the archaeological evidence, the classical sources provide a narrative and action. They offer us a range of characters, with a large supporting cast whose achievements and failures are fascinating to follow.

While the purist archaeologist might argue that one should study the Iron Age communities of Europe only through the archaeological data since the classical sources by their inevitable partiality and deliberate manipulation distort our understanding, to reject such a rich vein of anecdote would be defeatist: it would admit to an inability to treat the written sources critically.

The Greek and Roman authors have provided us with their own vision of the Celts, a vision born of contemporary or near-contemporary experience. That vision has pervaded Celtic studies for 2,000 years and cannot be ignored.

The Graeco-Roman Vision

Classical observers refer to the Continental Celts by a variety of names. The Roman historians writing of the migrations from north of the Alps to the Po valley and beyond called them *Galli*, and this tradition was followed by Polybius, to whom they were *Galatae*, a name also commonly used in other Greek sources. Most of the first-century BC writers, however, realized that these names were interchangeable with the Greek *Keltoi* and Latin *Celtae*. Indeed Caesar, writing of the inhabitants of central Gaul, specifically says: 'We call [them] Gauls, though in their own language they are called Celts.' The second-century AD Greek writer Pausanias also stressed that *Keltoi* was a more long-established term than *Galli*. The simplest way to explain this apparent confusion would be to accept that *Celtae/Keltoi* was the general name by which the broad sweep of peoples stretching from north of the Alps to Iberia were known to the classical world and knew themselves, and that *Galli/Galatae* was a specific term applied to those tribes among them that chose to migrate to the south and south-east. Caesar's statement 'We call them Gauls' may be interpreted as implying that the term had a Mediterranean origin. One possibility is that it comes from an Indo-European word meaning 'stranger' or 'enemy', in which case it can hardly be an ethnonym.

Knowledge of the Celts grew slowly up to the fourth century BC. The geographer Hecataeus had access to some information about the Celts. He was aware that the Greek colony of Massalia, founded about 600 BC, lay in the land of the Ligurians near the territory of the Celts, and that the settlement of Narbo (Narbonne) was Celtic. Hecataeus thus firmly establishes the presence of Celts in southern Gaul in the late sixth century. Elsewhere he mentions Nyrax as a Celtic city. No certain identification can be offered, but Noreia in Austria has been favoured by some commentators.

Herodotus of Halicarnassus, writing in the early fifth century BC, makes reference to Celts in his *Histories*, though he admits that his information about the west is imperfect. He provides three geographical observations:

that the source of the Danube is in the land of the Celts; that the river rises near the Celtic city of Pyrene; and that the Celts lived west of the ‘Pillars of Hercules’ (the Strait of Gibraltar) next to the Cynetoi, who were the westernmost peoples of Europe. Thus Herodotus’ informants seem to have believed that there were Celts living in both south-west Iberia and middle Europe. The mention of Pyrene as being near the source of the Danube does, however, present a difficulty since it is assumed to be related geographically to the Pyrenees, some suggesting it to be the port of Emporion (Asturias). Herodotus’ confused geography is unlikely to be resolved.

By the fourth century the Greeks had come to accept that the Celts occupied a large swathe of western Europe from Iberia to the Upper Danube. Ephorus (*c*.405–330) regarded them as one of the four great barbarian peoples of the world, along with the Scythians, Persians, and Libyans. In this he was reflecting the broad general model which helped the Greeks to explain the nature of the periphery beyond the civilized Mediterranean core. Strabo, writing more than two hundred years later, said that Ephorus believed ‘Celtica’ to be so large that it included most of Iberia as far west as Gadir (Cadiz).

It was during the fourth century that more detailed information about the Celtic peoples began to accumulate, when Celtic bands—settlers, raiders, and mercenaries—became involved in the politics and military affairs of the Mediterranean. Knowledge of the large-scale migration of Celts from north of the Alps to the Po valley *c*.400, and of subsequent raids southwards against Rome and beyond beginning in *c*.390, soon reached the Greek world, where Celtic warriors, along with Iberians, began to be employed as mercenary troops in the war between the Spartans and Thebes in 367BC. Thus, when Plato (429–347) in his *Laws* describes the Celts as warlike and hard-drinking, he may have been relying on first-hand experience rather than simply repeating a stereotype of ‘barbarians’.

Aristotle (384–322) clearly had access to a number of sources on which to base his generalized comments about Celtic peoples and he was certainly aware of the attack on Rome. For him the Celts were a hardy northern people: they exposed their children to their harsh climate with little clothing in order to toughen them, and excessive obesity among men was punished. They were warlike, ferocious, and fearless to the point of irrationality; the men took little notice of their women and rather preferred male company; and they had strict rules of hospitality, especially to strangers. A lost text, *Magicus*, sometimes ascribed to Aristotle, is said to mention the existence of Druids and holy men among the Celts and Galatae. The Aristotelian stereotype is a compound of anecdotal scraps presented within a vision of how barbarians ought to be. The balance of fact and prejudice is difficult to assess, but as noted above the range of information available from first-hand observation had greatly increased during the fourth century and it would be surprising if Aristotle had not used it with judgement and discretion.

While the intrusion of Celtic peoples into the Mediterranean world increased the familiarity of the classical world with them, expeditions, such as that undertaken by Pytheas of Massalia in *c*.320, will have broadened the knowledge base still further. Pytheas sailed along the Atlantic seaways in a voyage of discovery, his curiosity, no doubt, inspired by economic considerations. He describes the Armorican peninsula, which he considered to be a part of *KelticeÂ¯*, before going on to explore the coasts of Britain, perhaps even venturing still further north. For him the British Isles lay north of the land of the Celts and were known as the *Pretanic* islands. There is no suggestion that he regarded the Pretani as Celtic.

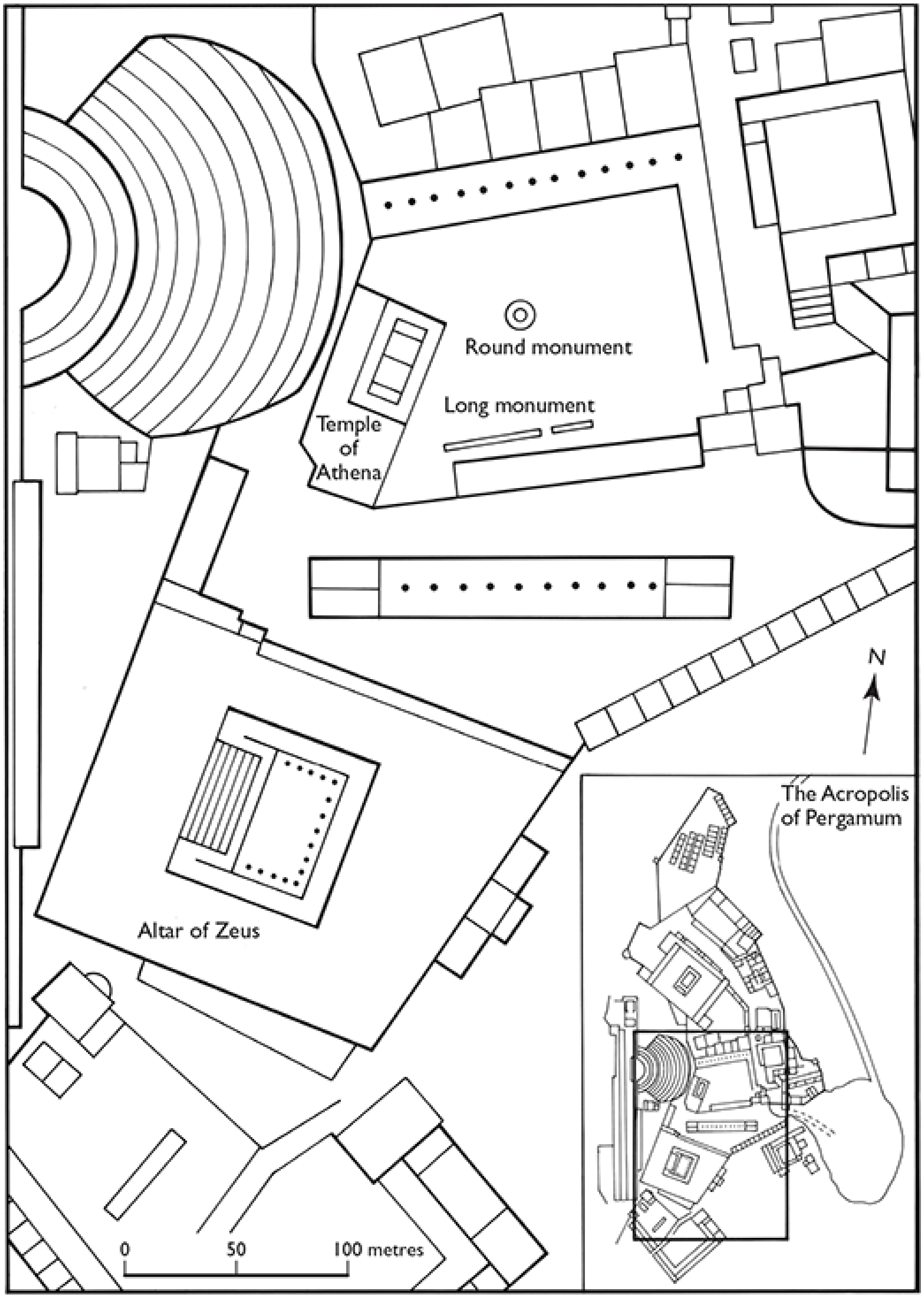
In parallel with the scientific discoveries of men like Pytheas and the philosophical considerations of Aristotle, Greek mythology expanded to take account of the Celts. According to Timaeus, they were descended either from the union of Polyphemus and Galatea or from the giant Keltos. Another version sees the Galatians as the descendants of Galatos, the son of Cyclops and Galatea. A different tradition assigns the fatherhood of Galatos or Keltos to Heracles, who, during his wanderings in the west, was seduced by Keltine, the beautiful daughter of King Bretannos. Unable to resist her charms, and to overcome her reluctance to give him back the cattle of Geryon, he felt impelled to sleep with her.

The Celts were brought into much sharper focus for the Romans and Greeks during the fourth and third centuries BC as hordes of warriors, sometimes accompanied by migrating communities, thrust their way into Italy, Greece, and Asia Minor. For Rome the dangerous conflict lasted from the initial advance southwards towards Rome soon after 400BC to the decisive battle of Telamon in 225. The Greek confrontation was shorter-lived, centring on the invasion of 280–278, which culminated in an attack on Delphi. In Asia Minor the Hellenistic and Roman armies were to confront Galatians throughout the century or so after the migration from Europe in the aftermath of their abortive Greek expedition.

It was during these two centuries that the Celtic stereotype was to acquire its familiar form. They were unrestrained, fearless warriors, irrationally brave in the first onslaught but prone to wild despair if the battle turned against them. Unpredictable and unreliable as allies, they could easily be aroused to battle fury but could quickly become too drunk or too paralysed by superstitious fear to fight. And above all they were barbarians: people of alien behaviour, cruel, and prone to such savagery as human sacrifice and even cannibalism. It is easy to see in this broad sketch—a sketch which any Greek or Roman schoolboy might have been expected to turn out—a stereotypical, almost timeless, description of 'the enemy from without', and yet beneath its simplistic exaggeration lie some elements of the truth learned from the bitter experience of two centuries of confrontation and conflict.

The historians of Greece and Rome, writers such as Polybius (*c*.204–*c*.122BC), Livy (59BC–AD 17), and Pausanias (late second century AD), were all attempting to project particular images of history. Their individual presentations of the Celt were necessarily conditioned by this, but the common thread which they wished to communicate was of their own systems triumphing over fearsome forces from without: the rational, civilized order of the state contrasted with the wild, savage chaos of the primitive barbarians. It was, therefore, the antitheses of the ideals of Graeco-Roman civilization that were emphasized in the classical accounts of the Celts. To point up the classical achievement, however, the enemy had also to be seen as a worthy opponent, fearless in battle and with a savage nobility that made his defeat the more remarkable.

These attitudes come together in the dramatic visual reality of contemporary sculpture. The violent savagery of Gauls looting a temple is brilliantly portrayed in a sculptured frieze of the second century BC from Civitalba (Ancona), but the power and nobility of the Celt is nowhere better captured than on the victory monuments erected by the Attalid kings at Pergamum and at Athens in the third and second centuries BC. The acropolis monument at Pergamum, commissioned by Attalus I in the 220s, is known to us only from later Roman marble copies: the famous Dying Gaul, a Gaulish warrior committing suicide beside his dead wife, and the head of a bearded Gaul. Together they convey the vision of an enemy one could be proud to have defeated.


Round monument
Long monument
Temple of Athena
Altar of Zeus
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The Acropolis of Pergamum
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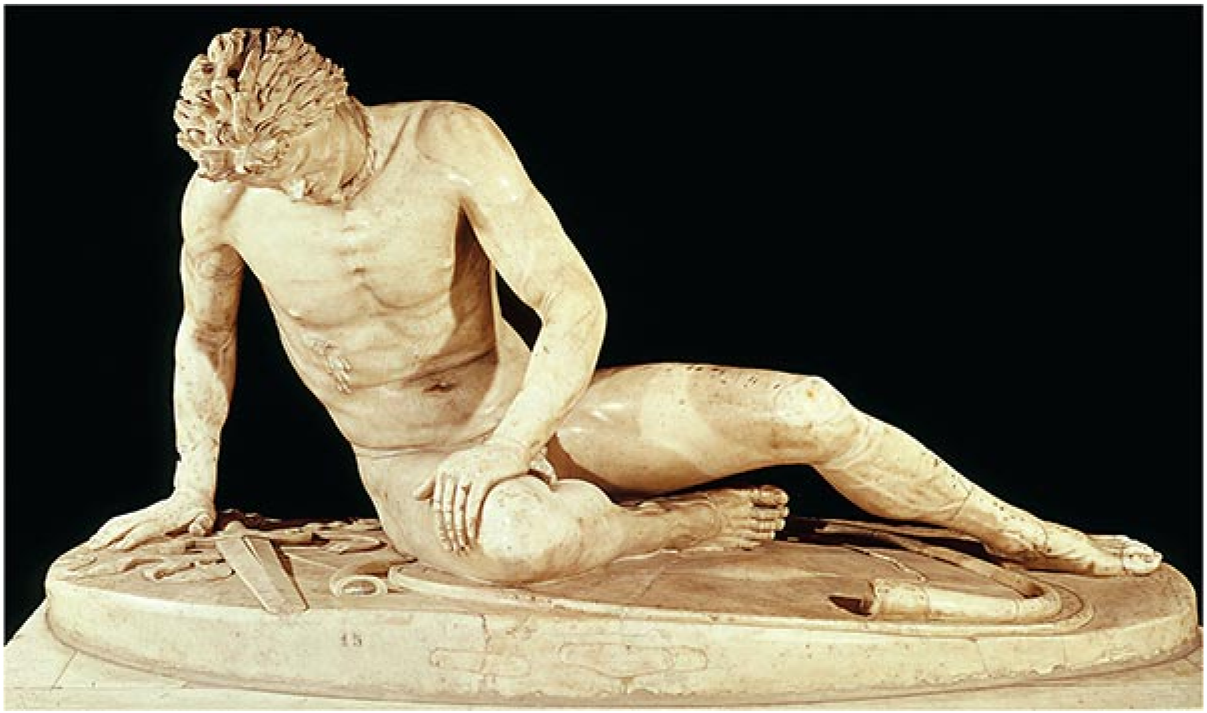
1.1 The acropolis of Pergamum in western Turkey was the focus of Pergamene power in the third and second centuries BC. The two religious precincts, the temple of Athena and the altar of Zeus, were focal points for the display of sculptural compositions celebrating Pergamene victories over Celtic raiders. Through these monuments the kings of Pergamum were laying claim to be the saviours of Hellenism.

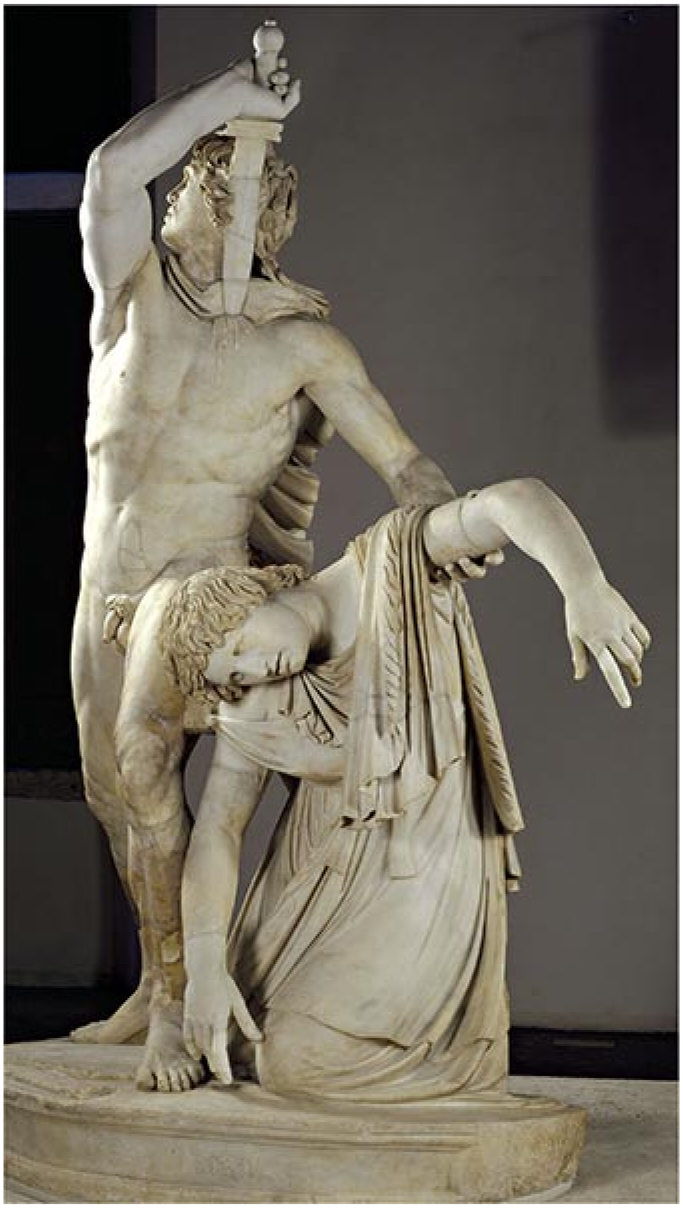


1.2 The Dying Gaul. The marble statue, now in the Capitoline Museum, Rome, is the image par excellence of Celtic nobility in battle. The naked warrior, with tousled hair and drooping moustache and wearing a neck torc, reclines bleeding on his shield, his discarded sword nearby. The statue is generally considered to be a copy of an original which adorned the monument erected in Pergamum by Attalus I after 228C and is thus a reliable representation of the Celts of Asia Minor in the late third century BC.

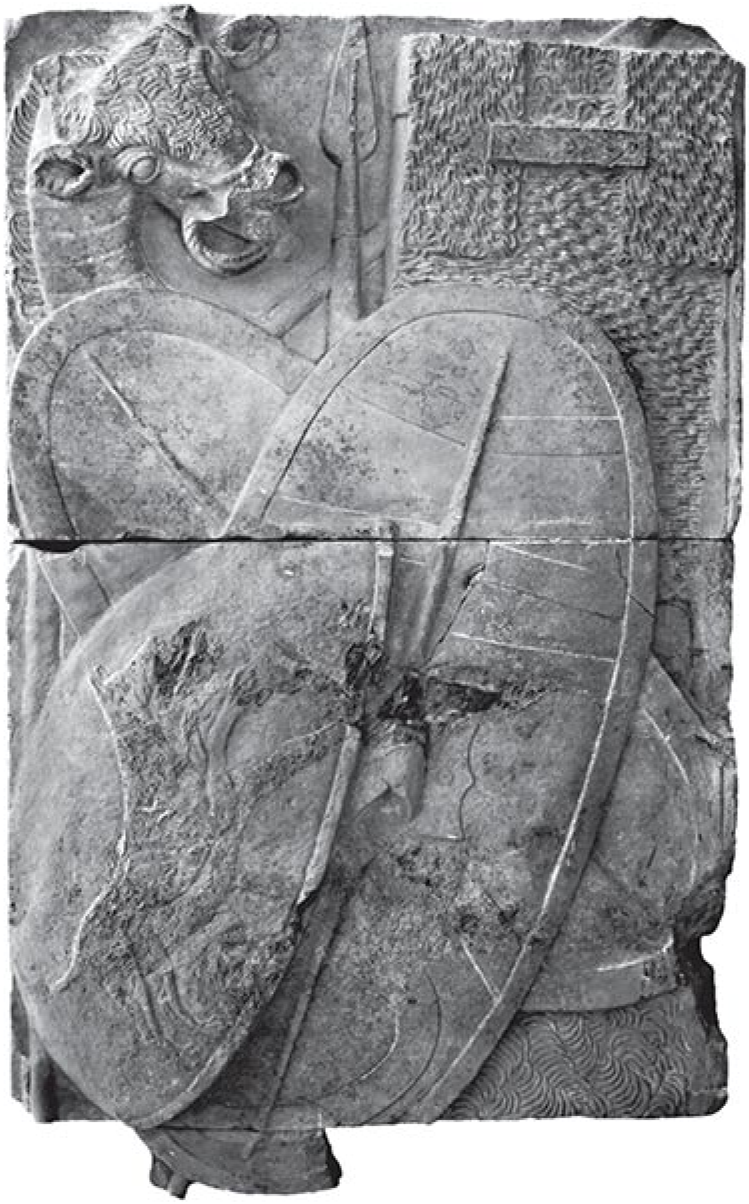
The Pergamene kingdom as the saviour of Hellenism is the theme displayed in an even more dramatic form in a victory monument erected on the acropolis of Athens after the final defeat of the Gauls between 168 and 166BC. Here, according to Pausanias, the Pergamene defeat of the Gauls in Asia Minor was presented in parallel with the Greek victory over the Persians at Marathon and both were balanced with mythological battles, the Greeks against the Amazons and the ancestors of the Pergamenes against the Giants. The claim of the Attalids was, thus, blatant: they, like the Greeks, have throughout time been the saviours of civilization against the external forces of chaos and destruction. The allusion was already there in the *Hymn to Delos*, written by Callimachus, who lived at the time of the Celtic attack on Delphi, in which the Celts are likened to ‘Latter-day Titans’. Of the many Gauls who would have been depicted among the hundred or so statues that formed the monument, five survive in Roman marble copies (one in the Louvre in Paris, one in Naples, and three in Venice); all are portrayed at their moment of defeat as cowed by the might of their conquerors. A similar message was conveyed by the great frieze carved around the outside of the altar of Zeus at Pergamum showing Zeus and Athena defeating the Giants while the Attalids defeat the Gauls. Here again the Pergamene rulers are claiming to be the heroes who saved the civilized world.

In these remarkable survivals, the classical vision of the Celts as it was perceived by those with the power to purvey their own version of history and its messages stands out in sharp focus. Once created it has remained in the consciousness of all subsequent observers.

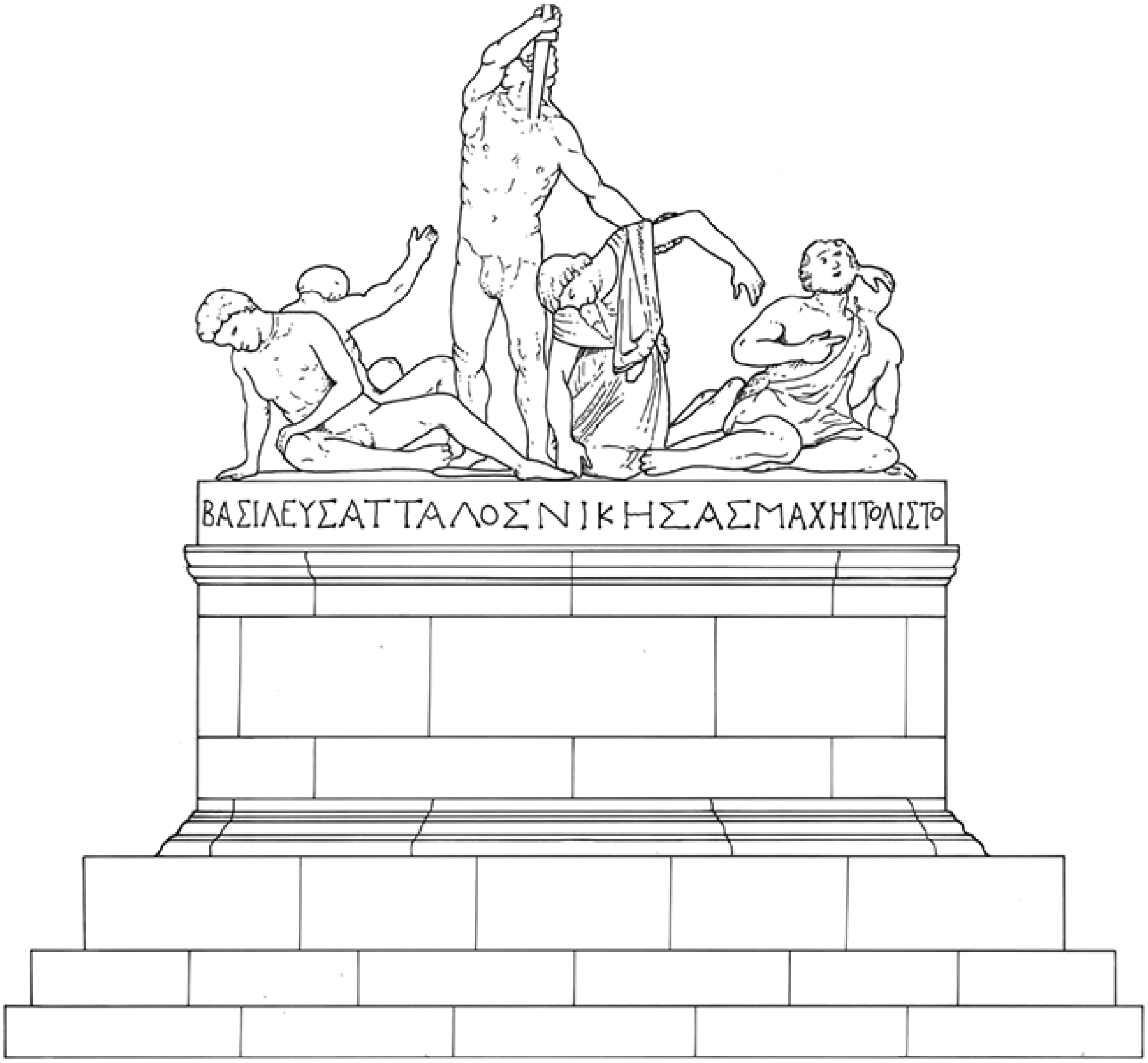
With the threat of the Celts as a force for destruction receding in the second century, a somewhat different metaphor began to develop. The most informative source is the work of Poseidonius (*c.*135–*c.* 50 BC), a Syrian Greek from Apamaea. Poseidonius wrote a series of *Histories* in fifty-two books, beginning his narrative in the mid-second century to follow on from the *Histories* of Polybius. Book 23 contained an ethnographical introduction about the Celts as a background to the Roman conquest of Transalpina completed in 121BC. For this he had access to a variety of earlier sources augmented by his own travels in Gaul. The information at his disposal, then, comprised much anecdotal material reflecting earlier times which he was able to present alongside his own more systematic observations. The *Histories* are no longer extant but were extensively used, sometimes with direct acknowledgement, by three later writers, Strabo (*c.*64BC–AD 21), Diodorus Siculus (who wrote *c.*60–30BC), and Athenaeus (*c.*AD200), and they may also have been used by Julius Caesar as a source for the ethnographic descriptions in his Book 6 of the *Gallic War*. Poseidonius was a Stoic philosopher, and, as Athenaeus tells us, in describing the customs of many peoples he composed his work ‘in accordance with his philosophical convictions’. In essence Poseidonius believed that contemporary barbarian peoples reflected a condition closer to the Golden Age than civilized societies, and that in that Golden Age people were ruled by the wise. To this extent his account of the Celts has something of a rosy glow about it. Thus he approves of their bravery and of their honouring of the brave, and comments favourably upon their hospitality to strangers. He excuses their fondness for war and their impetuous nature, saying that they were really a straightforward people and not of evil character; he even came to terms with the idea of Celtic headhunting. They were, in fact, only like boisterous schoolchildren. ‘To the frankness and high-spiritedness of their temperament must be added the traits of childish boastfulness and love of decoration.’ But they were ruled by wisdom because among those specially honoured and given authority were the Druids, who were the natural and moral philosophers and men of science. ‘They are believed to be the most just of men.’ In his Celtic ethnography Poseidonius can fairly be accused of being a ‘soft primitivist’ who shielded himself and his readers from the realities of Celtic societies. This same attitude is evident in the works of the Alexandrian school from the first century AD onwards which, using written sources rather than field observation, present Celtic religion and Druidism as on a par with Pythagorean systems.



1.3 A Celtic warrior committing suicide in defeat by the body of his dead wife. The group, now in the Museo Nazionale Romano, Palazzo Altemps, is probably a marble copy of an original which once adorned the Temple of Athena Nikephoros at Pergamum commissioned by Attalus I at the end of the third century BC.



1.4 Marble relief from the sanctuary of Athena Nikephoros at Pergamum, now in the Antikensammlung, Staatliche Museen, Berlin. The relief gives an accurate impression of Celtic armour of the late third century BC showing a tunic of chain mail, shields, a spear, and an animal-headed *carnyx* (war trumpet).



1.5 The ‘round monument’, only the base of which remains, in the sanctuary of Athena at Pergamum, is thought by some scholars to have been the focus for the display of statues of the defeated Celts. Marble copies of these works were taken to Italy, where several have survived. This imaginative reconstruction by A. Schober was published in 1952.

From the middle of the first century BC a new sense of reality was instilled by writers such as Caesar, Lucan, and Tacitus, who reported on the conquest of the Gauls and the Britons. Although there was some recourse to the old stereotypes for the standard ethnographic introductions, these writers convey much of the atmosphere of political turmoil among the Celtic peoples. Thus Caesar: ‘In Gaul there are factions not only in every state and village and party but practically even in individual households'; and Tacitus: 'Once they owed obedience to kings: now they are distracted between the warring factions of rival chiefs.' Implicit in comments of this kind lies the justification for conquest: not only was such instability on Rome's borders intolerable to her but also conquest and Romanization would bring peace to the benighted barbarians. The point is explicitly made in a set-piece speech which Tacitus attributes to Petillius Cerialis in AD 69, though in all probability it is the historian speaking:

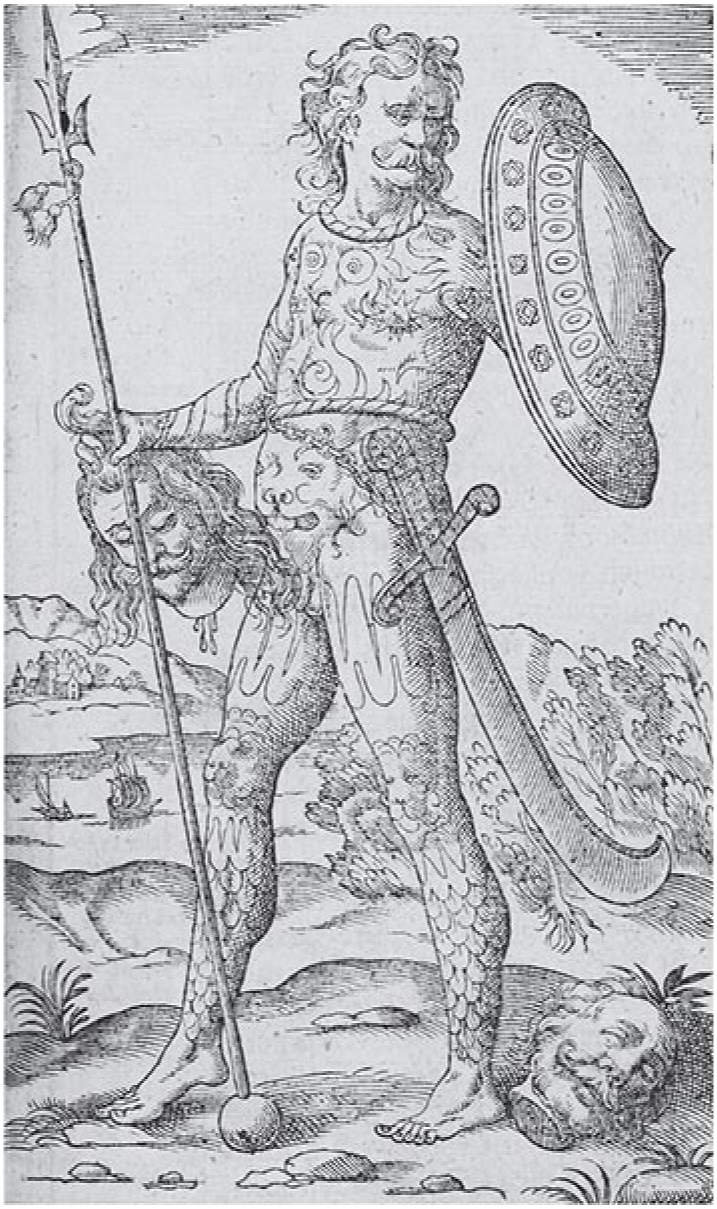
1.6 (*Opposite*) The city of Pergamum, in Aegean Turkey, was the capital from which the Attalid dynasty led the struggle against Celtic war bands in the third century BC. To monumentalize their victories they created many great buildings ornamented with sculptural compositions often depicting their enemies, particularly the Celts. One of the most impressive of these was the great altar of Zeus excavated in the nineteenth century. All that now remains is the sad ruin of its stepped foundation: the superstructure was removed and is now on display in the Pergamonmuseum, Berlin.

> Throughout the whole of Gaul there were always despots and wars until you passed under our control. We ourselves, despite many provocations, imposed upon you by right of conquest only such additional burdens as were necessary for preserving peace. Stability between nations cannot be maintained without armies, nor armies without pay, nor pay without taxation. Everything else is shared equally between us.
>
> (*Hist.* 4. 73)

Tacitus takes a rather more realistic view when he puts into the mouth of the British war leader Calgacus, facing the Roman army in northern Scotland in AD 84, a damning indictment of Rome: ‘Pillagers of the world, they have exhausted the land by their indiscriminate plunder . . . to robbery, butchery, and rapine, they give the lying name of “(government)”; they create a desolation and call it peace’ (*Agricola* 30).

While Caesar has a specific political agenda to achieve through his presentation of the Gauls, Tacitus uses the Britons and Germans as part of a general tirade against what he perceives to be the shortcomings of the Roman leadership. Modern decadence and indiscipline and the loss of individual liberty are his themes, and the Britons and Germans provide convenient characters through which to insinuate his views. The Celts are no longer a serious threat to Rome; it is the danger from within that is more destructive. For Tacitus, then, the Celts provide the allegory.

From the end of the first century AD barbarians other than the Celts provided the raw material for invective and polemic, and attitudes began to mellow as second- and third-generation Gauls and Britons became creative and influential citizens of the empire. Martial, born in AD&$3;MP;AMP;#X2005;40 at Bilbilis (now Calatayud in Saragossa, Spain), several times proclaimed his pride in his Celtiberian origins (‘we who are descended from Celts and Iberians’) and both Iberia and Gaul produced men of real literary talent. Only in occasional disparaging references to the northern Britons—such as Ausonius’ epigram that *matus* (drunk) rather than *bonus* (good) is a more appropriate description for a Briton—can we see the old Celtic stereotype recurring.

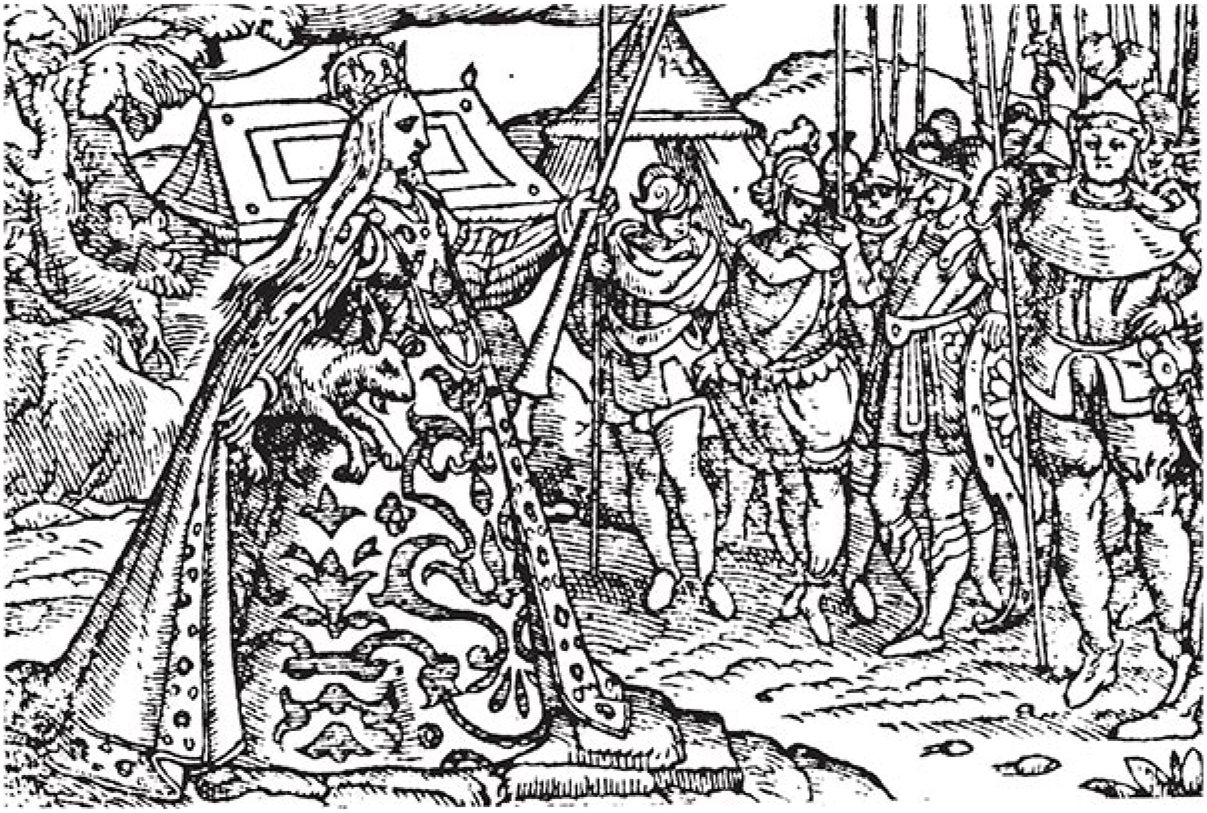


1.7 A seventeenth-century vision of an Ancient Briton: a woodcut from John Speed’s *Historie*, published in 1611. The ultimate source seems to be a watercolour drawing by John White dating to about 1588. White’s ideas were based on his first-hand observations of native Americans. Nakedness, body-painting, long hair, neck torcs, and headhunting are all characteristics of the generalized ‘Celt’ derived from classical sources, which were becoming available in printed form at about this time.

Oblivion and Awakening: *c.*1500–1700

From the fourth century until the sixteenth century AD the world cared little for Celts. The classical texts were largely lost or forgotten, and the universal appeal of Christianity, with its own texts, mythologies, and stereotypes, provided all the models that were required to order behaviour and to inspire origin myths and protohistories. Yet it was Christianity that kept alive a knowledge of the Celts in the manuscript copies of the classical sources preserved in monastic libraries.

In the sixteenth century many of these texts began to become more widely available in printed form. The manuscript of Tacitus' *Agricola* reached Rome about 1470 and was published in Milan five to ten years later, while Caesar's *Gallic War* was published in Venice in 1511. By the beginning of the seventeenth century most of the major texts were available in their original languages and in translation. This coincided with a general awakening in western Europe of the need to create national prehistories based on fact rather than myth. In Britain the scholar John Leland (1503–52) began to collect data avidly on his travels throughout the country, while at the end of the century William Camden (1551–1623) produced the first serious attempt at explaining the early origins of Britain in his *Britannia*, first published in 1586. In France the Celts were beginning to come to the fore in such works as Jean Le Fèbvre's *Les Fleurs et antiquités des Gaules*, published in 1534, and particular attention was beginning to be paid to the practices and philosophy of the Druids throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.



1.8 Raphael Holinshed’s vision of Queen Boudica (Boadiccea as she was then known), queen of the British tribe the Iceni, who in AD 60 led a rebellion against the Romans. Illustrated in his *Chronicles* (1578). The similarity to Queen Elizabeth I reviewing her troops is unmistakable.

The discovery of the New World with its startling range of ‘primitive peoples’, each living in their own distinctive ethnographic present, and the beginning of the exploration of Africa and the East provided ample comparative material for those writing about the prehistory of European society. Samuel Daniel could liken the tribal warfare of pre-Roman Britain to that of the American Indians, while John White could use his field drawings of Virginian Indians as models for Picts and Britons. What was beginning to emerge throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was the concept of the Celts, Gauls, and Britons as Noble Savages, not unlike the soft-primitivist approach of Poseidonius. It was a trend which was to develop still further in the eighteenth century after an awareness of the islanders of the South Seas enlivened the European consciousness.

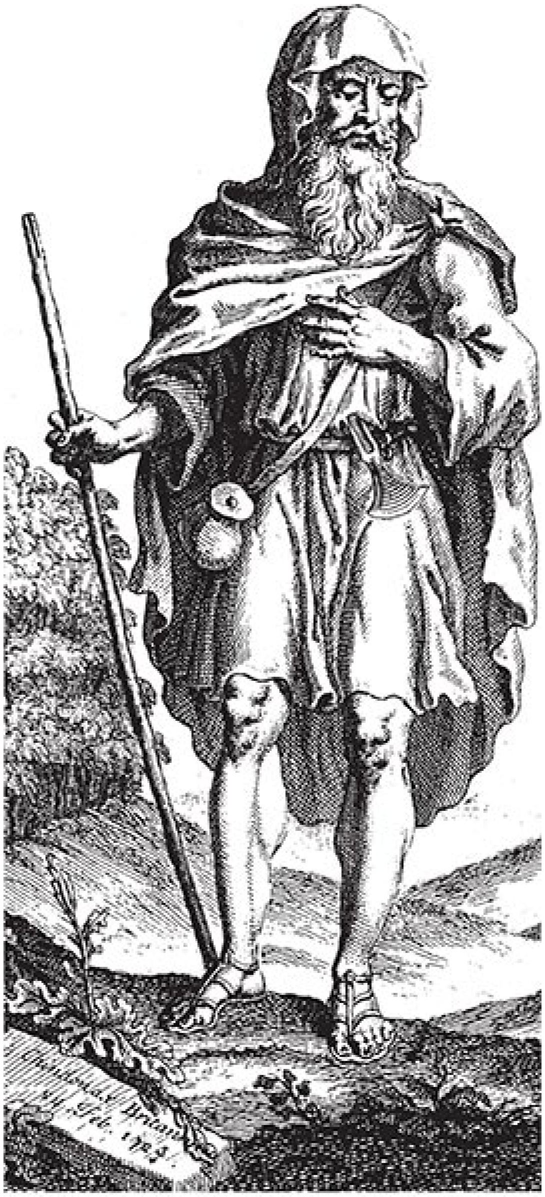
Celtomania and Nationalism: *c.*1700–1870

By the beginning of the eighteenth century the antiquarians concerned with early Europe had access to the principal classical texts, a varied array of ethnological analogies, and a growing knowledge of the prehistoric monuments and artefacts of their own countries. The three elements were combined, particularly in France and Britain, to create a vision of the past peopled by Celts and Druids. In Britain the movement was led by William Stukeley (1687–1765), who began in 1723 to write a history of the ancient Celts in four parts. The work was never completed, but his two volumes on Stonehenge and Avebury, published in 1740 and 1743, ascribed both monuments to the 'British Druids'. In the wake of Stukeley's energetic proselytizing, virtually all the megalithic monuments of Britain—tombs, circles, and alignments—were considered to be the preserve of Druids, while the hillforts were seen as 'Ancient British' strongholds or as the camps of Caesar built during his expeditions in 55 and 54BC.

In France the same enthusiasms prevailed. In 1703 Paul-Yves Pezron, a Breton priest, published his *Antiquité de la nation et de la langue des Celtes, autrement appellez Gaulois*. By the end of the century the belief that the megaliths were Celtic was firmly entrenched in such works as Théophile-Malo Corret de La Tour d'Auvergne's *Origines gauloises* (1796) and Jacques Cambry's *Monumens celtiques* (1805), which assigned all the Breton megaliths to the Celts.

Another pursuit of those caught up in the romance of Celtomania was to 'discover' Celtic literary traditions still extant in the folk memory of peasants living in remote areas. The most blatant case of invention came from Scotland, where James Macpherson created single-handedly the poems of Ossian, which he published between 1760 and 1763. This complete fabrication was to have a profound effect throughout Europe in the fight for national identity: Ossian features large in the freedom poetry of the Hungarian Sándor PetoÂ´Â´fi (1823–49). Nor were the Welsh free from romantic invention. In 1792 the ceremony of *Maen Gorsedd* was created. It was held on the autumn equinox and involved Welsh bards in an extended performance of pompous ritual heavy with symbolism, requiring for its props an altar and a circle of stones. The entire pastiche of an 'ancient tradition' was the invention of the Welsh stonemason Edward

Williams, who preferred to be known by his bardic name, Iolo Morganwg. By managing to have the Gorsedd attached to the more ancient and respectable ceremony of the Welsh Eisteddfod in 1819, Williams ensured the survival of his nonsensical Celtic creation.



1.9 A Druid seen through the vivid imagination of William Stukeley. From his volume *Stonehenge*, published in 1740. The axe in the belt is of Bronze Age type, but such details were unappreciated in Stukeley’s time.

1.10 Statue of Vercingetorix, the Gaulish resistance leader who confronted Caesar at Alesia in 52BC. The statue, which dominates the plateau of Alesia, was erected at the instigation of the emperor Napoleon III in 1865. Napoleon organized a detailed field study of Caesar's campaigns. There is a certain stylized resemblance between the emperor and the statue.

In Brittany folk memories and ancient songs were avidly collected by Théodore Hersart, vicomte de La Villemarqué, whose *Barzaz-Breiz* (Songs of Brittany) was first published in 1839, at a time when the French government was attempting to wipe out Breton culture and language. He was roundly condemned by some of his contemporaries, who claimed that his songs were inventions, but his field notebooks have come to light showing that he had, in fact, recorded genuinely ancient material passed on orally among the country people over generations.

The Celtomania of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, with its mixture of facts and fantasies, has its place in the history of scholarship. It was a stage through which western European antiquarianism, almost inevitably, had to pass, since it provided the first faltering attempts at bringing together classical sources, the study of antiquities, oral traditions, and language to create a European past. What is more surprising is that much of the romantic nonsense of this phase still persists.

The French archaeologist Salomon Reinach, looking back over the outpourings of *Les Celtomanes*, could satirize their beliefs:

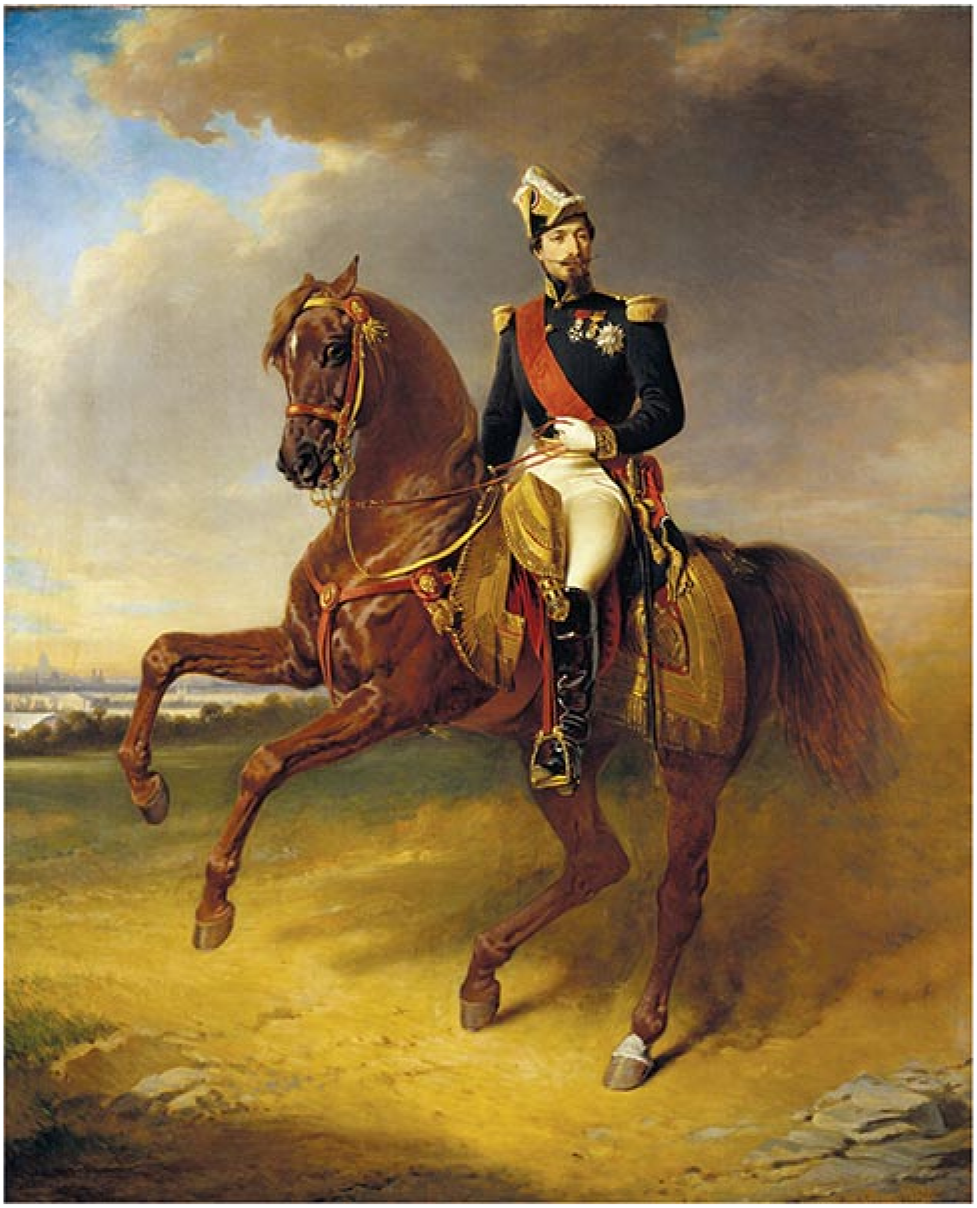
> The Celts are the oldest people in the world; their language is preserved practically intact in Bas-Breton; they were profound philosophers whose inspired doctrines have been handed down by the Welsh Bardic Schools; dolmens are their altars, where their priests the Druids offered human sacrifice; stone alignments were their astronomical observatories.

He could afford to be scathingly dismissive, for after 1870 the results of archaeological activity throughout western Europe were casting an entirely new light on the culture of the Iron Age (see Chapter 2).

1.11 Queen Boudica as she appears resplendent in her chariot on the Thames Embankment facing the Houses of Parliament. The statue, erected in 1902, depicts the British queen as the model of late Victorian regal nobility.

Beneath the romantic Celtism of the eighteenth century lay an undercurrent of nationalism which intensified and became more explicit in the nineteenth century. The classical sources provided a galaxy of national heroes—Boudica in Britain, Vercingetorix in France, Ambiorix in Belgium, Viriathus in Iberia—all of whom could be used as symbols of national identity and freedom when required. The statue of Vercingetorix erected at Alise-Sainte-Reine (Côte d'Or) in 1865, that of Ambiorix in heroic guise unveiled at Tongeren in Belgium not long afterwards, and the bronze Boudica set up on the Thames Embankment in London in 1902 were there to provide much-needed inspiration for creating national identity in the tumultuous century between the end of the Napoleonic Wars and the outbreak of the First World War.

In much of this, France took the lead. The famous statue of the Dying Gaul, bought at great expense by the French monarchy in 1737, was eventually transferred to France by Napoleon Bonaparte, on whom the potency of the image will not have been lost. Bonaparte established the Académie celtique in Paris in 1805, but it was left to Napoleon’s nephew Louis Napoleon to initiate what must surely be the earliest planned research programme in Iron Age archaeology. Returning to France after a period in exile, he was elected president of the Second Republic in 1848, seizing further power four years later to become emperor, thereafter styling himself Napoleon III. France had been through a long period of upheaval and was facing the threat of increasing Prussian militarism.

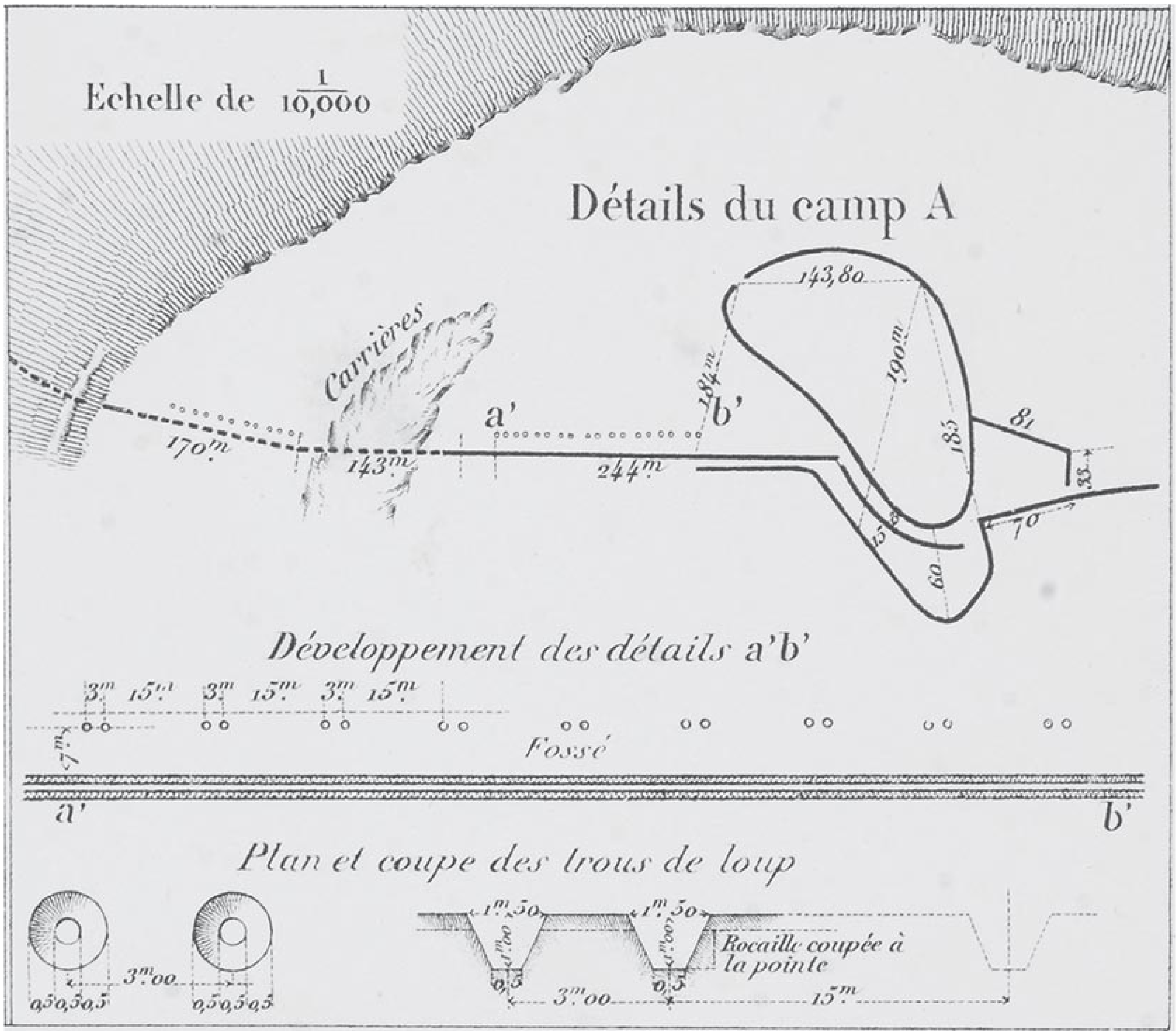


1.12 Napoleon III was emperor of France from 1852 until 1870, when he was defeated and captured by the Prussians at Sedan. During the Second Empire, largely as a result of Napoleon's scholarly interests, the archaeological study of Iron Age Gaul flourished. Painting by Charles-Ã‰douard Boutibonne, 1856.

Napoleon III was a scholar as well as being a politician and skilfully combined his personal academic inclination with the need to boost French morale by sponsoring a spectacular campaign of fieldwork and excavation to provide archaeological data for his projected work, the *Histoire de Jules César*. The fieldwork was undertaken between 1860 and 1865 by Colonel

E. Stoffel with the aid of up to 300 assistants and labourers. The colonel's task was to research the topography of Caesar's campaigns and to identify the battlefields, an assignment completed with varying degrees of success, the highlight being the discovery and excavation of the siege works and battleground of Alesia, where the war leader Vercingetorix made his last heroic stand against Rome. To provide further Celtic background to these events, Napoleon initiated a large-scale excavation of the principal *oppidum* of the Aedui at Bibracte (Mont Beuvray, near Autun), a task which he entrusted to J.-G. Bulliot. Of the three projected volumes of the *Histoire*, two were published, in 1865 and 1866. The foundation of Le Musée des Antiquités nationales in Paris in 1863 ensured that his growing collection of Celtic antiquities, complete with models and reconstructions, would become readily accessible to the general public.

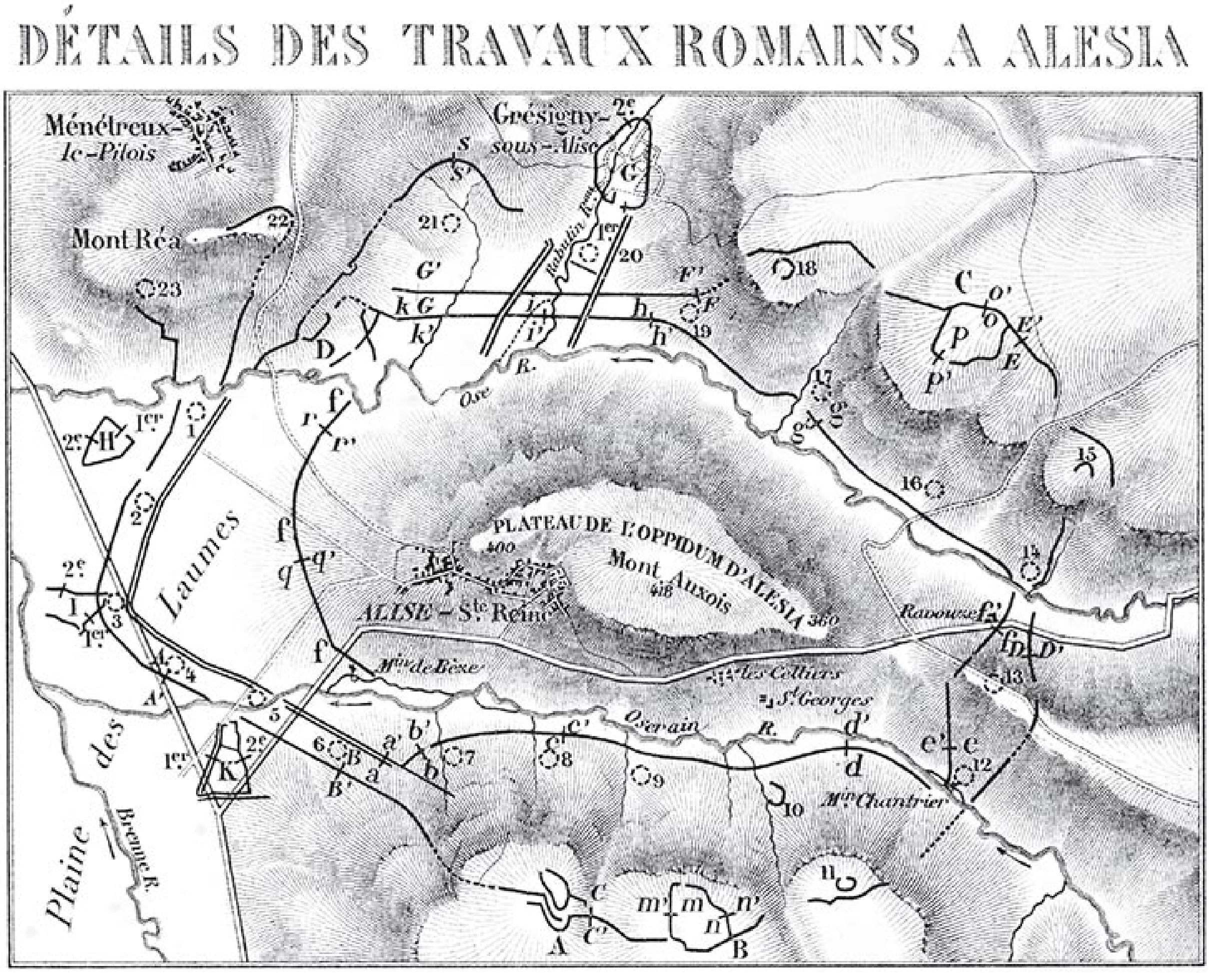
In intensifying, and possibly even creating, public awareness of the Gauls and of their heroic resistance to the external aggressor, Rome, Napoleon III was deliberately setting out to inculcate a national spirit. His attitude to Caesar was ambivalent. Caesar confronted Gaulish opposition, but he did so, Napoleon claimed, because otherwise the country would have been overrun by Germans—the parallels would not have needed stressing to the French public in the 1860s. But the Roman conquest also had the advantage of unifying Gaul during a long period of peace in a way never before or after achieved. When in 1870 Napoleon rode out at Sedan to lead the French army to a disastrous defeat at the hands of the Prussians, one wonders whether it was Vercingetorix or Caesar that provided his role model.


Echelle de 1/10,000
Détails du camp A
Carrières
a'
b'
170m
143m
244m
143,80
184m
190m
185
81
33
70
58
60
Développement des détails a'b'
3m 15m 3m 15m 3m 15m
7m
Fossé
a'
b'
Plan et coupe des trous de loup
3m00
0,5 0,5 0,5
0,5 0,5 0,5
1m,50
1m,50
1m,00
1m,00
0,5
0,5
3m00
15m
Rocaille coupée à la pointe

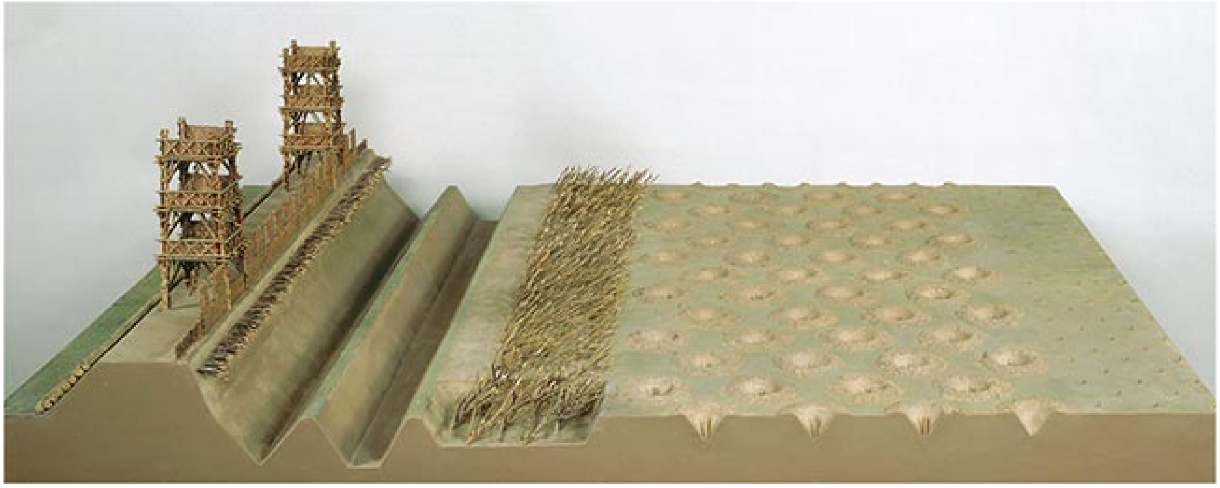
1.13 Colonel Stoffel, who led the research team set up by Napoleon III to excavate Alesia, in his quest to discover details of Caesar's military installations cut trial trenches to test the existence and form of buried ditches and pits. This careful work enabled him to produce plans of Caesar's forts and associated defensive works. The illustration, taken from Napoleon III's *Histoire de Jules CÃ©sar* (1865–6), is the plan of one of Caesar's camps on the outer circumvallation designed to restrain the army of Vercingetorix at Alesia.

The Romantic movement which had gripped Europe in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries provided a major stimulus to Celtomania in those regions which could claim to be Celtic. The 'discovery' of poetic traditions like the Ossian epic invented by Macpherson and the nonsenses which sprang from the fertile imagination of Iolo Morganwg should not detract from more serious work, such as Evan Evans's *Some Specimens from the Poetry of the Antient Welsh Bards* (1764), La Villemarqué's

Barzaz-Breiz (1839), or, for that matter, the literary genius of Sir Walter Scott, whose novels and poems gave a new nobility to the Highlander at the moment when all things Celtic were being proscribed in Scotland. Out of this ferment of literary and folkloric outpourings more solid structures began to crystallize: the foundation of the Society of Cymmrodorion in 1751 and the Cambrian Archaeological Association in 1846 provided a sound academic framework for Wales, while in Scotland the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland was instituted in 1780. In Ireland the Royal Irish Academy came into being in 1785 and the Royal Institution of Cornwall emerged in 1818.


DÉTAILS DES TRAVAUX ROMAINS A ALESIA
Ménétreux-le-Pitois
Grésigny-sous-Alise
Mont Réa
PLATEAU DE L'OPPIDUM D'ALESIA
Mont Auxois
ALISE-Ste Reine
Laumes
Plaine des
Brenne R.
Ose R.
Oserain R.
Mln de Bèze
les Celliers
St Georges
Ravouze
Mln Chantrier
Rabutin R.

1.14 (*Top*) Plan of the *oppidum* of Alesia showing the siege works constructed by Julius Caesar in 52BC. The plan, based on fieldwork and excavation undertaken by Colonel Stoffel, was published in Napoleon III’s *Histoire de Jules CÃ©sar* in 1865–6.



1.15 (*Bottom*) A model of Caesar’s circumvallation of Alesia based on descriptions in his *Commentaries* and excavations undertaken by Colonel Stoffel in the 1860s.

For the most part these organizations provided structured forums where the like-minded could research and celebrate their past, but inevitably such societies provided, often unwittingly, an underpinning for nationalist sentiments, and the perceived Celtic ancestry offered a degree of unity. This was particularly developed in Brittany, where, in 1867, La Villemarqué set up the first of a series of Interceltic Congresses to which were invited ‘kith and kin’ from Wales, ‘brothers’ from Cornwall, and ‘cousins’ from Ireland and Scotland. It was from these roots that the Breton separatist movement *Breiz Atao* (‘Brittany for Ever’) was to grow in the interwar years. Pan-Celticism provided strength. It also offered an identity of otherness: *we* the Celts as opposed to *them* the French and English. This is nowhere better illustrated than in an essay written by the Breton priest-scholar Ernest Renan, *The Poetry of the Celtic Races*, published in English in 1896. The essay begins by describing the stark contrasts experienced by a traveller passing from Normandy into Brittany:

> A cold wind arises full of a vague sadness, and carries the soul to other thoughts; the tree-tops are bare and twisted; the heath with its monotony of tint stretches away into the distance; at every step the granite protrudes from a soil too scanty to cover it; a sea that is almost always sombre girdles the horizon with eternal moaning. The same contrast is manifest in the people: to Norman vulgarity, to a plump and prosperous population, happy to live, full of its own interests, egoistical as are all these who make a habit of enjoyment, succeeds a timid and reserved race living altogether within itself, heavy in appearance but capable of profound feeling, and of an adorable delicacy in its religious instincts.

The Celt as ‘other’ living in the wild extremities of Atlantic Europe is a metaphor still very much alive today.

The Contribution of Archaeology: 1870–1970

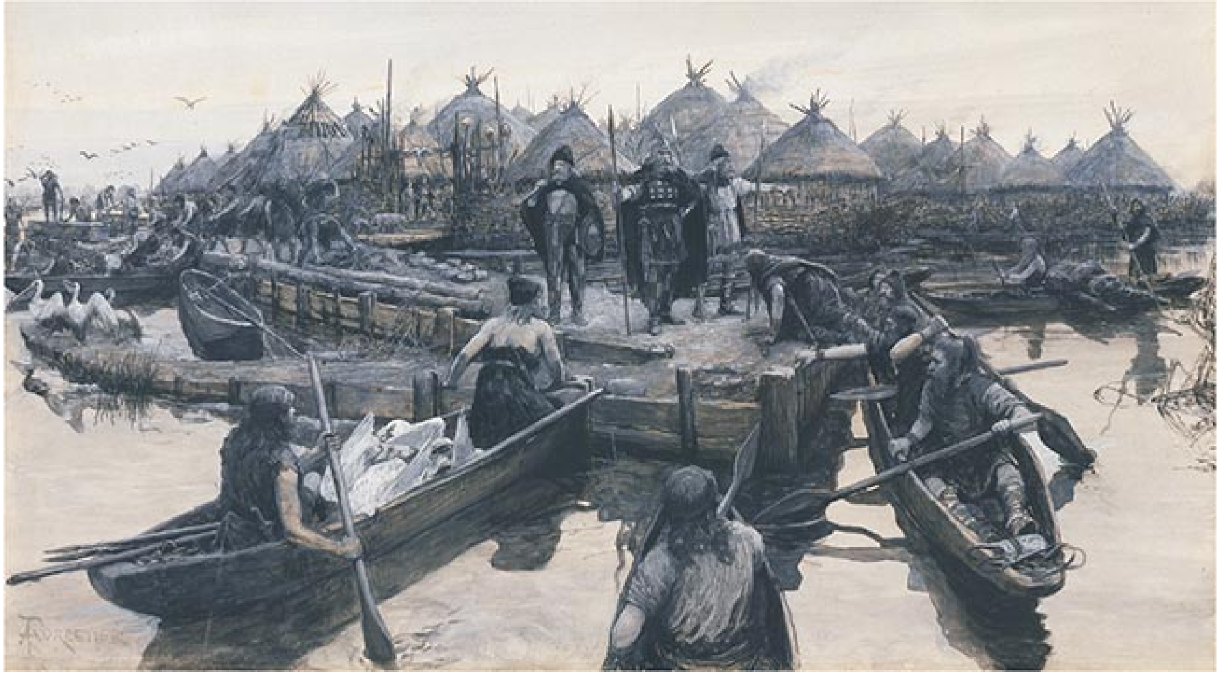
The growing awareness of the material culture of the pre-Roman Iron Age in the middle of the nineteenth century began to introduce a new realism into the study of late prehistoric Europe, but it was not until 1871 that the historic Celts could confidently be identified with the recognition that the cultural assemblages found in the graves of Champagne and the lakeside site of La Tène in Switzerland were closely matched by those associated with a series of burials inserted into the ruins of the Etruscan town of Marzabotto (see Chapter 2). Thereafter the belief that the movements of people could be traced in the archaeological record gained wide acceptance, and the invasionist model became central to much archaeological writing.

Material of La Tène type found throughout central and eastern Europe was directly related to the historic expansion of the Celts, though the extreme paucity of La Tène material in Greece and Asia Minor, where the Celts were known to have been active, was a salutary warning of the adage that absence of evidence is not evidence of absence.

In the west the situation was more complex. The study of ancient European languages had shown that forms of Celtic were spoken over much of the Iberian peninsula, the British Isles, and Ireland, and yet there was no historical record of Celtic migrations into these areas. It was, therefore, left to archaeologists and linguists to construct models of invasion from their two disparate viewpoints. Since each relied heavily on the other, a considerable degree of circularity developed in the arguments. In Iberia the classical sources indicated a Celtic presence by the sixth century BC, and this was supported by linguistic arguments that suggested that the Celtic spoken in the peninsula was more ancient than that recorded in Gaul (see Chapter 4). Thus it was incumbent on archaeologists to identify evidence for the Celtic migration from west central Europe through the Pyrenees by searching out the material culture of the Iberian Late Bronze Age. This approach was most influentially propounded by P. Bosch-Gimpera in his famous paper ‘Two Celtic Waves in Spain’, published in 1939 in the *Proceedings of the British Academy*. In Britain and Ireland invasionist theories were summed up in the elegant formulations of Christopher Hawkes, presented in a paper entitled ‘Hillforts’, published in the journal *Antiquity* in 1931, in which a series of migratory waves were envisaged.

Simple invasionist theories of this kind were in common use until the 1960s and are still found from time to time in the more popular literature. Their modelling was based partly on the classical accounts of Celtic movements, but also derived inspiration from an awareness of the migrations of the late Roman and early medieval periods. Behind it all lay the knowledge, gleaned from recent history, of the dramatic cultural changes, linguistic and material, that had been brought about by western European imperial expansion across the world. This strengthened the implicit belief that cultural change was most simply to be explained as the result of folk movement.

The Celts that emerged during this period still retained the image of the warrior intent upon feasting and raiding—in other words the classical vision—but, in a century dominated by recurring war, much of it resulting from German militarism, a new image began to develop in which the Celt was given a more homely, creative guise in contrast to other barbarians, in particular the ‘warlike Germans’. In other words, the Celt was becoming domesticated. This was subtly, and perhaps unconsciously, achieved by putting increased emphasis on artistic and technical achievements and on the hearth-and-home aspects of the archaeological record. Such an approach was particularly well developed in Britain, where the creative originality of Celtic art had long been recognized, and where the extreme paucity of cemeteries producing warrior equipment forced archaeologists to focus on settlement sites and the productive systems that sustained them. The first recognizable ordering of the British agrarian landscape became known as Celtic field systems, and the term was readily, if inappropriately, adopted in the Low Countries and Denmark.



1.16 Celtic domesticity as imagined by A. Forestier in his illustration of 1911, based on the excavated evidence derived from the examination of the lake village of Glastonbury, Somerset.

The Celt of the period 1870–1970 is, therefore, a complex creation. In the image of the nineteenth-century imperialists, he was prepared to fight his way into new territories, taking his women and children with him, but there to settle down to till the soil while the womenfolk spun, weaved, and ground the corn. His love of art was well developed and he was served by craftsmen of great originality and skill. Even his wife could add to the artistic ambience of the home by making pleasantly decorated pots. He was not unduly aggressive but would fiercely protect his family and home if danger threatened. The discovery of a ‘war cemetery’ at the gate of the hillfort of Maiden Castle in Dorset, attributed to the gallant Celts defending their settlement against Roman invaders, provided a potent image which caught the grim public mood in the late 1930s, and, by the time that the excavation report was finally published in the depths of the Second World War, the ‘war-mad’ Celt of the Poseidonian tradition had become *celticus domesticus*.

In France, too, opportunity for allegory was not lost. In 1949, in the aftermath of the Second World War, a monument was erected on the plain of Les Laumes below Alesia. It records:

> On this plain 2,000 years ago Gaul saved her honour, pitting, at Vercingetorix' call, her peoples against Caesar's legions. After her reversal upon the battlefield, reconciled with the victor, united, defended against the invasions of the Germans, open to the enlightenment of Greece and Rome, she knew three centuries of peace.

Celts at the End of the Century

Since 1970 there has been a subtle change in the vision of the Celt, with an increasing emphasis on the economic systems which underpinned society and with the use of world-systems models. The development of coinage and the emergence of *oppida*, widely believed to be of urban character, are areas upon which much research has been focused. These developments were, in part, the result of a more widespread interest in economic structures among archaeologists, a trend which can be related to a much broader awareness of global economics occasioned by political moves towards a more united Europe. The pan-European image of the Celts was highly appropriate to this political imperative.

The mounting of the spectacular exhibition 'The Celts, the Origins of Europe' in Venice in 1991, under the auspices of Palazzo Grassi and sponsored by the multinational Fiat company, is an example of the soft political use to which the Celts were being put. The point was explicitly made by the President of Palazzo Grassi in his introduction to the exhibition catalogue *The Celts*:

> This exhibition is a tribute both to the new Europe which cannot come to fruition without a comprehensive awareness of its unity, and to the fact that, in addition to its Roman and Christian sources, today's Europe traces its roots from the Celtic heritage, which is there for all to see.

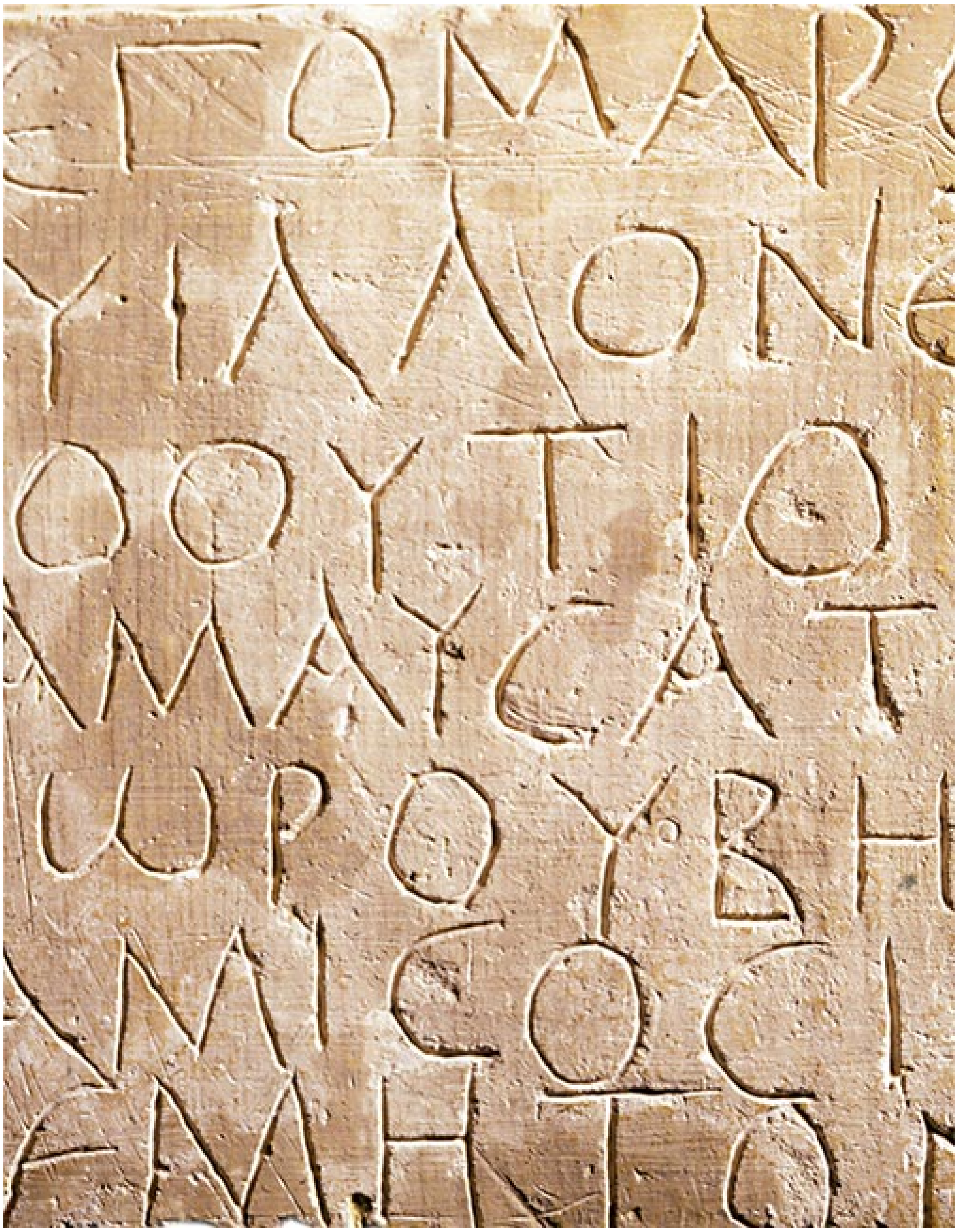
It is in the light of this vision that one can best understand the initiative of President Mitterrand in providing lavish funds from the French state to support a new programme of multinational excavations at the Aeduian capital of Bibracte. In doing so he was echoing the gesture of Napoleon III, though for rather different political motives.

Jacquetta Hawkes summed it all up in the memorable thought that each generation gets the archaeology it deserves. Put another way, it is difficult, indeed impossible, to study the past without being affected by the transient values and aspirations of the moment. By attempting to understand the distortions wrought on the past by previous generations we can be on guard against introducing distortions of our own and accepting those created for their own ends by our political leaders.

Celts in the New Millennium

Programmes of fieldwork and excavation across Europe daily produce new data relevant to the study of the historical Celts. The record increases at an exponential rate and, with it, our understanding of the complexity and diversity of the European Iron Age grows to the extent that we must constantly question whether the term Celt has any ethnic or historical validity. I believe that it does to the extent that there was a common shared language, versions of which live on in the western extremities of the Continent. There were also shared belief systems and value systems, manifest in the surviving material culture, suggesting a high degree of connectivity over considerable areas, a connectivity explained, in part, by an innate restlessness leading at times to folk movements on a large scale. It was these mobile groups, from large populations on the move to small raiding parties, that the Mediterranean world came to know as Celts. 'Celt', then, is a term that may legitimately be used at a level of generalization, much as the names Iberian, Scythian, Greek, or Etruscan help us to construct intelligible historical narratives.

One of the questions that had come to be debated in the last two decades is what can be said of the origin of the Celts. This issue has been studiously avoided in the past, perhaps because it cannot be answered with any degree of certainty. But one way to approach it is by considering the possible origins of the Celtic language in relation to what is now known about the early prehistory of Europe. This has led some scholars to suggest that the language may have developed early in the Atlantic zone as a lingua franca and later, perhaps in the mid-third millennium, to have spread eastwards into western and west central Europe with the early Beaker movements (see Chapter 3). To what extent this hypothesis will stand up to close scrutiny remains to be seen. Much will depend on the results of current work on ancient DNA, which will enable population movements to be characterized and quantified in a way never before possible. But we must await a significant body of such data before beginning to create new historical narratives. What is certain is that our vision of the Celts will change, possibly quite dramatically, over the next decade.

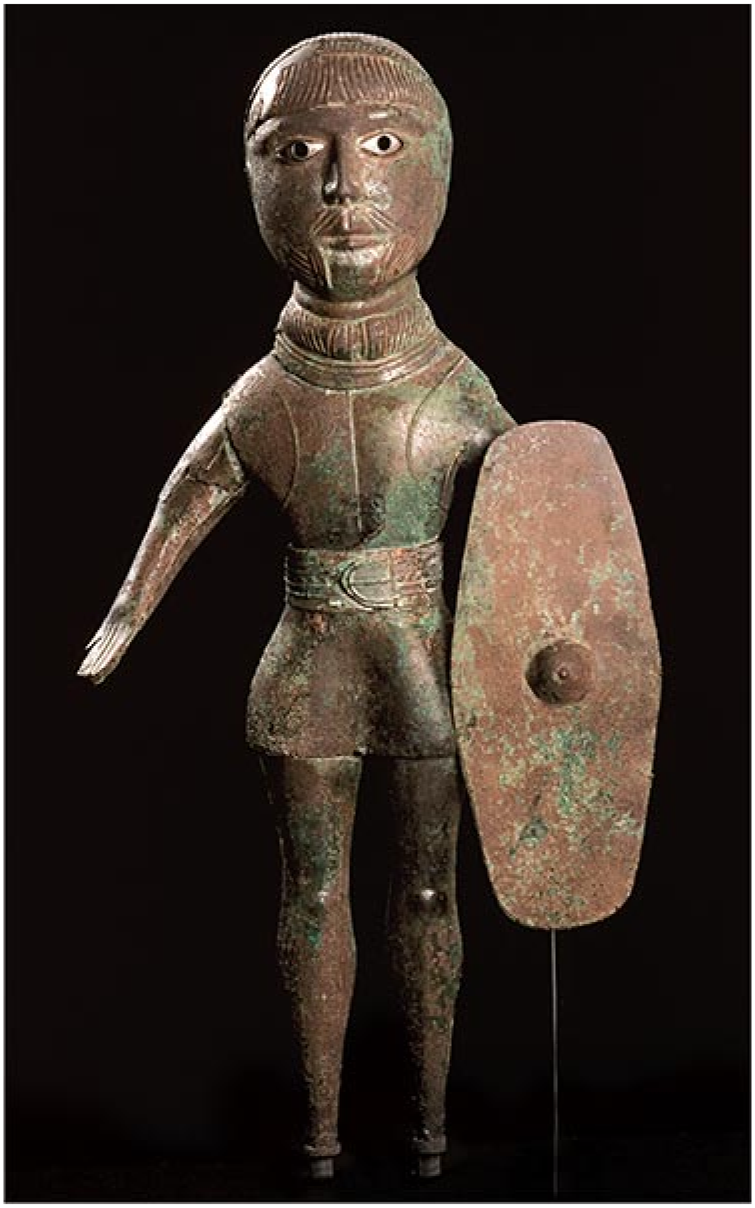

ΕΓΟΜΑΡ
ΥΙΛΛΟΝΕ
ΟΟΥΤΙΟ
ΜΑΥϹΑΤ
ωΡΟΥ·ΒΗ
ΝΜΙϹΟϹΙ
ΑΝΗΤΟ

2

Constructing the Historical Celts

THE concept of the Celts has many realities born of different disciplines. The earliest vision of the Celt was that created by the Greek and Roman writers—a stereotype based on close observation but simplified and highlighted in such a way as to form a generalized image easy to comprehend. By stressing certain aspects of appearance and behaviour these writers created a caricature of the barbarian other, different in every way from us who are civilized. This topos was translated into visual form in Hellenistic statuary, which became widely known across the Mediterranean world through Roman copies. The 'classical Celts' were real to the people who created the concept. Endowed with motives, passions, and names, they were fearsome and alien, the very thought of them sending a shiver down the spine.

The Celt of the classical authors served as a model for antiquarians in the eighteenth and nineteenth century attempting to understand the past, but there was much new to be incorporated. A growing understanding of the languages of the Atlantic fringes of Europe, which from the early eighteenth century began to be called Celtic, introduced new complexities, not least the need to explain their origins. A little later the vernacular literature of these Celtic-speaking peoples in Ireland and Wales came to be more widely known. In it there were resonances of the world of the classical Celts—of chariots, feasting, and single combat—but much more besides. It was a febrile world of magic and uncertainty, with deities who could change shape at will always poised to interfere in the destinies of humans.



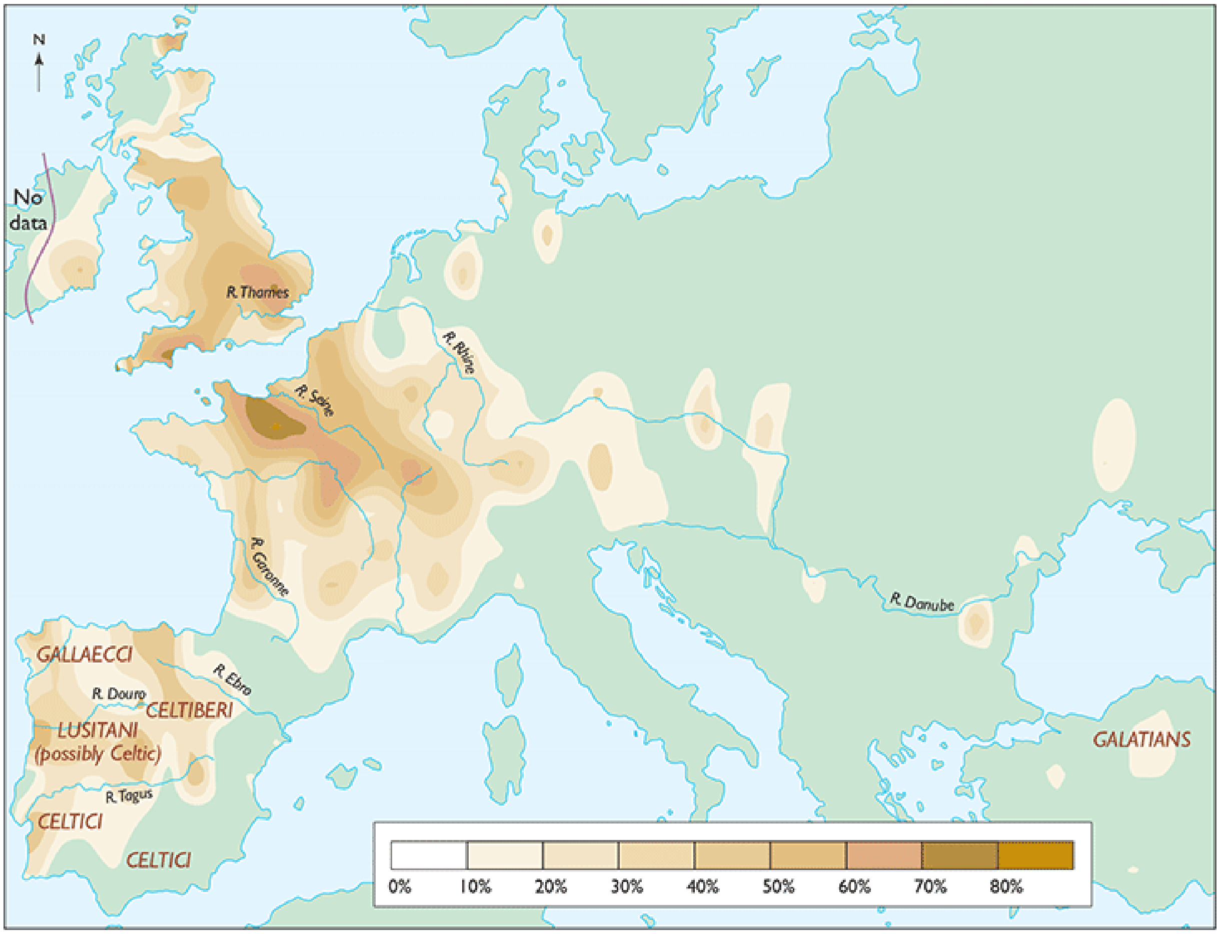
2.1 Statue of a warrior embossed from bronze sheets. The eyes are inset with glass paste. The swept-back hair and long drooping moustache are characteristic of Gaulish representations of Celtic warrior deities. Probably first century BC. From Saint-Maur-en-Chaussée, Oise, France. Musée départemental de l’Oise, Beauvais.

Archaeological advances in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries provided a new reality through the discovery first of the weapons and artefacts used by Celtic peoples and later of the settlements in which they had lived and the detritus of the economies which had sustained them. Finally, in the 1930s and 1940s, the art of the Celts became recognized as a subject worthy of study, making it possible to bridge the gap between the classical vision, the vernacular mystery, and the somewhat mundane archaeological reality. The excitement of the subject is that it can be approached from these very different directions, all of which have validity within their own academic parameters. Yet what emerges presents an altogether different set of images.

In the previous chapter we considered the classical model and its evolution in broad outline. Here it is necessary to explore in more detail the main classes of evidence that have helped to expand and modify that model.

The Celtic Language

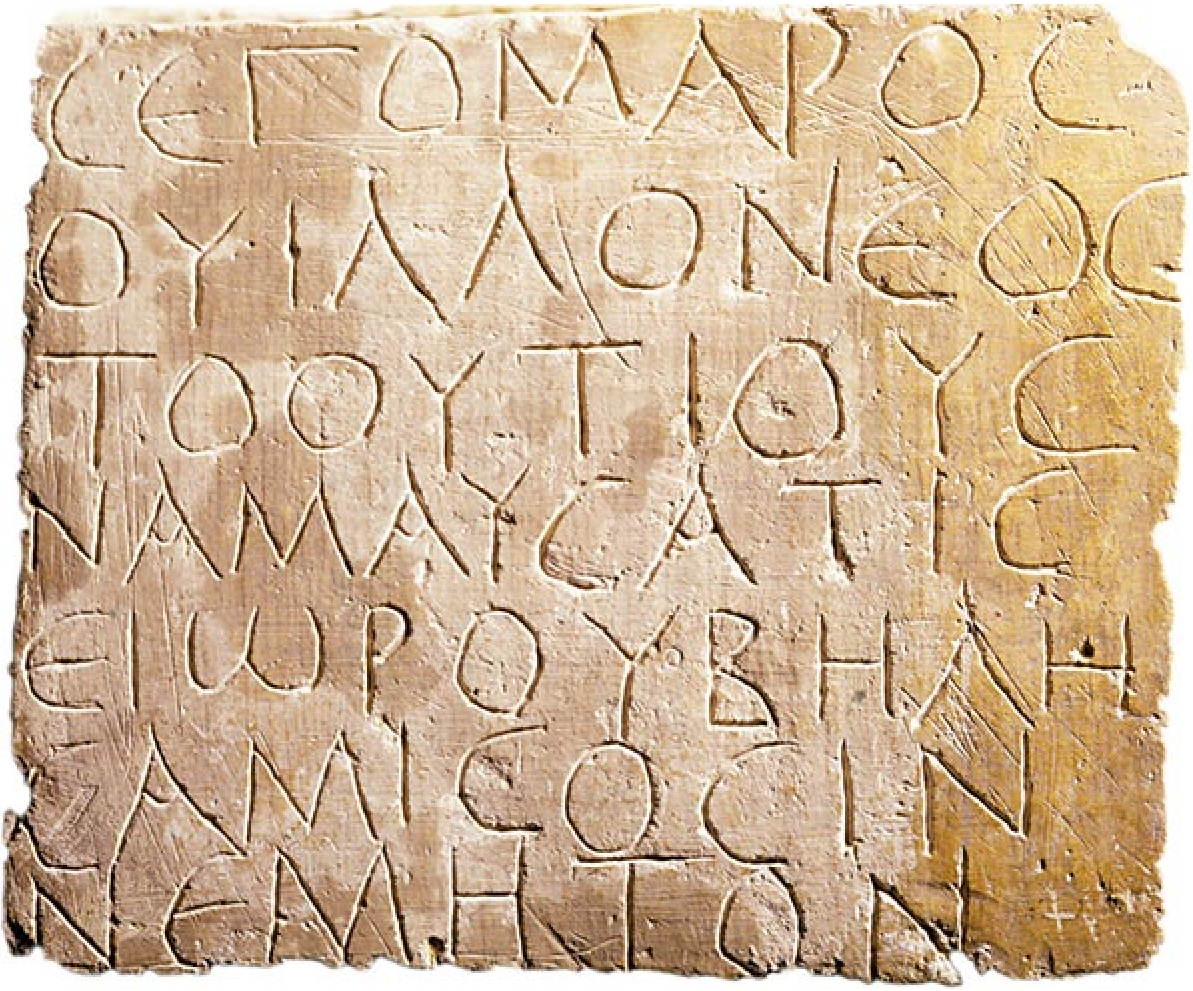
Celtic belongs to the family of Indo-European languages. It is closest to the Italic languages such as Latin, to such an extent that some linguists have postulated a common Italo-Celtic origin for both. This hypothetical group is believed to be broadly equivalent to two other European families, one from which the Baltic, Slav, and Germanic languages were to evolve and the other ancestral to Greek. The point at which Celtic began to be distinguished is much debated. The more conventional view has, for a long time, been that Italic and Celtic separated and developed in the regions in which they were to flourish during the period 1300–800 BC, before outward migration of the Celts and the Latins in the first millennium. But more recent work, using computer-modelling procedures to analyse standard vocabularies, has offered a different picture suggesting that the Celtic language group first became distinguishable from the rest of the Indo-European languages of the European peninsula around 4000 BC and that the distinction between the Goidelic and Brythonic groups of Celtic languages took place about 900 BC. The implications of this new work will be considered in Chapter 3.


N
No data
R. Thames
R. Rhine
R. Seine
R. Garonne
R. Danube
GALLAECCI
R. Ebro
R. Douro
CELTIBERI
LUSITANI
(possibly Celtic)
R. Tagus
CELTICI
CELTICI
GALATIANS
0%
10%
20%
30%
40%
50%
60%
70%
80%

2.2 The frequency of surviving ancient Celtic place names in Europe and Asia Minor mapped as percentage contours. The absence of names in western Ireland is because no data is available; after S. Oppenheimer, *The Origins of the British* (London, 2006), Figure 2.1b, 2006. Based on data from Patrick Sims-Williams, 2006.

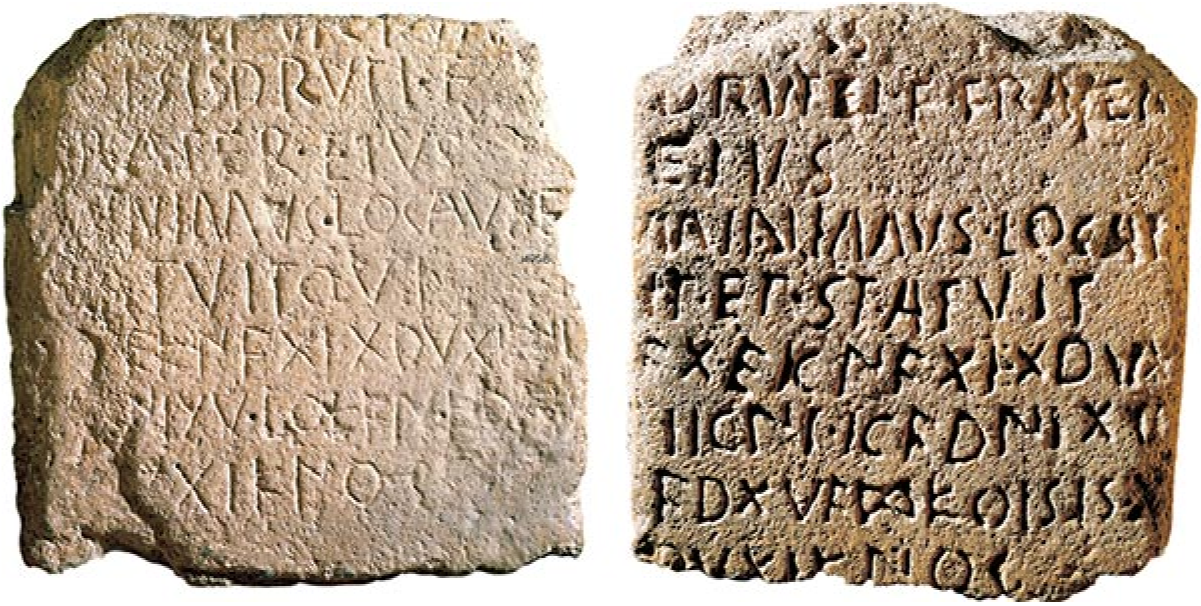
Celtic languages are spoken now only in the extreme Atlantic periphery of Europe, but originally they extended in a broad swathe from south-western Iberia, through Gaul and the Alpine region, into the Middle Danube, with one group of settlers, the Galatians, introducing Celtic into central Asia Minor, where, according to St Jerome, it was still recognizable in the fourth century AD.

The different types of recorded Celtic may be divided into two broad groups: Continental and Insular. Continental Celtic is known from the evidence of place names and personal names recorded by classical historians from coins, and from a comparatively small number of inscriptions. Using this evidence it is possible to distinguish four, possibly five, Continental Celtic languages. In Iberia, Celtiberian was spoken over much of the centre, west, and north of the peninsula. The earliest inscriptions date to the third century BC, but, as we have seen, the Greek writers record that Celts were to be identified in the region at least two centuries earlier. A recent study of inscriptions discovered in the extreme south-west corner of Iberia, written in Phoenician script, strongly suggests that the language transcribed was Celtic. The earliest of these inscriptions dates to the eighth century BC (see Chapters 3 and 4). In Gaul, the Gaulish language was spoken extensively in the first century BC and is well represented in a hundred or so inscriptions. South of the Alps in the north-western part of the Po valley a distinctive form of Celtic known as Lepontic has been identified in about seventy inscriptions. The earliest of these date back to the sixth century BC. Finally, in the Middle Danube valley place names and personal names indicate that the Celtic spoken here differed from the western Celtic languages, but little is known of its structure or date except that many of the names are no later than the first century BC.



2.3 Stone slab from Vaison-la-Romaine, Vaucluse, France, inscribed in Graec -Gaulish. It probably dates to the middle of the first century bc and records the gift of land to the goddess Belesma by Segomaros, son of Villonos, citizen of Nemausus (Nîmes). Musée Calvet, Avignon.

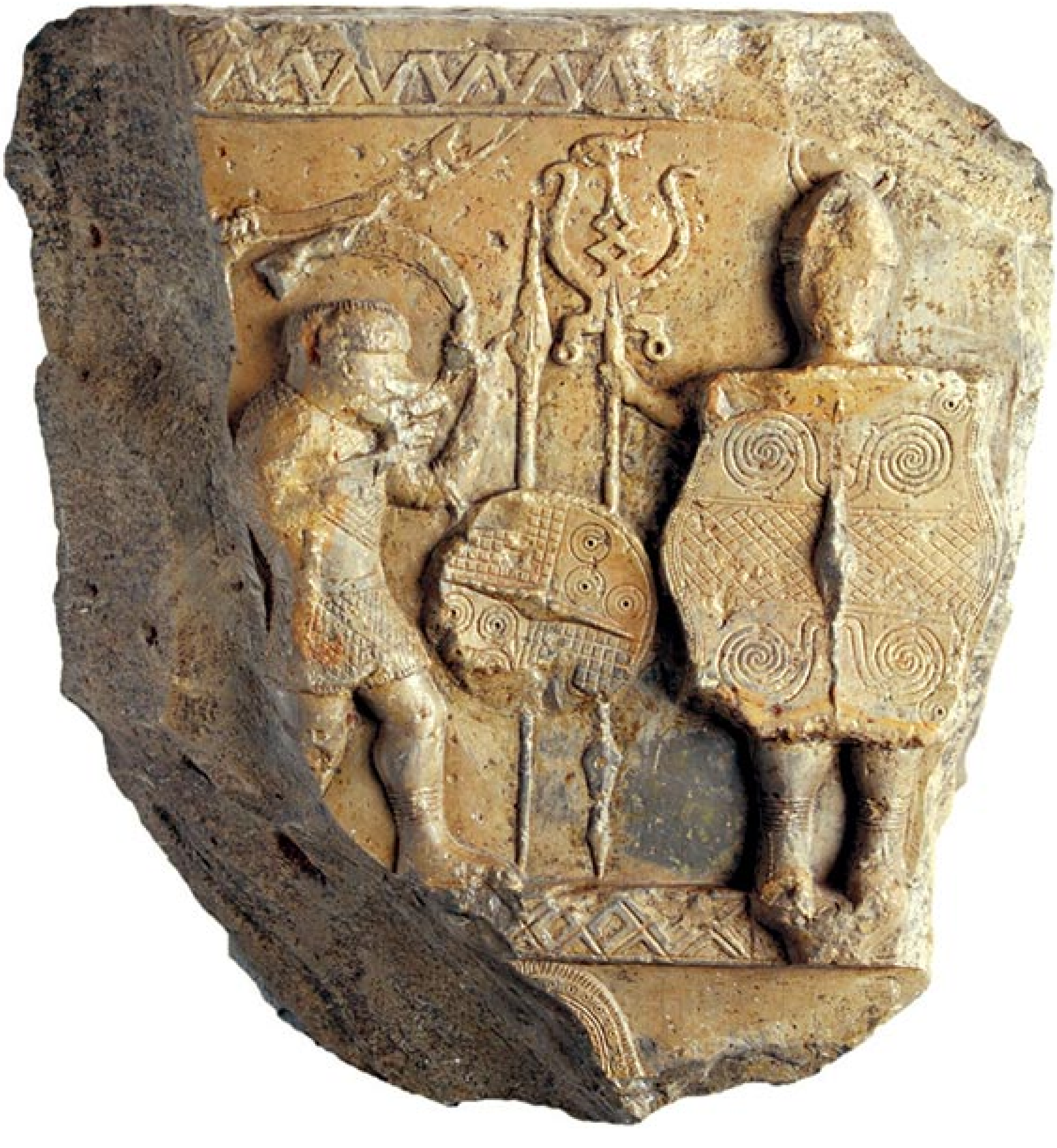
The Insular Celtic languages were spoken in Great Britain, Ireland, and Brittany. It has been conventional to divide them into two groups: Q-Celtic, or Goidelic, spoken in Ireland, the Isle of Man, and western Scotland, and P-Celtic, or Brythonic, which forms the basis of modern Welsh, Cornish, and Breton. The long-established belief has been that Q-Celtic was the older form and was adopted by the Atlantic communities at an early date but was overtaken in Great Britain by the more recently evolved P-Celtic, which was the basis of Gaulish. It was further believed that Q-Celtic was reintroduced in Scotland and the Isle of Man by invaders from Ireland in the third and fourth centuries AD and that P-Celtic was reintroduced to Brittany by settlers from south-west Britain arriving in the fifth century AD. Recent work has, however, suggested that this model is probably a considerable oversimplification. It has been noted that P-Celtic place names are recorded in Ireland, though they may be transliterations of Q-Celtic names by P-Celtic speakers reporting them to the geographers of the classical world. The introduction of the Breton language poses more problems and it is probably more in keeping with reality to interpret it as native Armorican P-Celtic, surviving beneath an overlay of Latin, reinvigorated by the similar language of the British settlers. A further factor to bear in mind is that the division between the two types of Celtic may be less significant than was originally believed.



2.4 A bilingual inscription in Latin and Celtic from Todi, Italy, dating to the second century BC. Museo Gregoriano Egizio, Musei Vaticani, Rome.

Awareness of the character of the Insular Celtic languages emerged in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, inspired by the researches of the Oxford scholar Edward Lhuyd, Assistant Keeper at the Ashmolean Museum from 1687 and its Keeper from 1691 until his death in 1709. As a true polymath, Lhuyd had many interests and skills, but it was in the field of comparative Celtic linguistics that he made his most lasting contribution. In 1695 he presented a prospectus for an ambitious publication to be entitled *Archaeologia Britannica*, which was to contain a comparison of Welsh with other European languages, especially Greek, Latin, Irish, Cornish, and Armorican. After extensive travel in the west of

Britain and in Ireland, he returned to Oxford in 1701 to begin writing. The first volume of *Archaeologia* contains grammars and vocabularies of Irish, Breton, and Cornish, with supporting discussions and etymologies. He noted the close relationship between Gaulish, Irish, and British, and the similarities between Welsh, Cornish, and Breton, but he did not systematize it as a Q/P distinction.



2.5 Part of a stone relief from Bormio, Sondrio, Italy, dating to the fifth century BC. The warriors appear to be equipped with Celtic-style arms. Recent work on the Lepontic language of this area suggests that Celtic was spoken here as early as the sixth–fifth centuries BC, before the historic migrations began. Soprintendenza Archeologia della Lombardia.

In the Welsh preface to *Archaeologia*, as well as in correspondence, he used his linguistic studies to put forward a scheme to explain the ‘colonization’ of Britain, suggesting that the Irish Britons were a colonial movement from Gaul who settled first in southern Britain. They were pushed out into the north of Britain and over to Ireland by a second wave of Gaulish settlers. In attempting to relate language, through the careful study of etymology, to people and migrations, Lhuyd was formulating a model which was to dominate Celtic studies for 300 years. An alternative view, that the Celtic languages originated in the Atlantic fringes of Europe, will be presented in Chapter 3.

Lhuyd was working in one corner of the web of European languages. Already, a century before, Joseph Scaliger (1540–1609) had divided the European languages into four groups (characterized by their word for God). Subsequently various attempts were made to trace the European and related languages back to a common ancestor. In 1796 Sir William Jones, a judge of the Supreme Court of India, suggested, in a lecture, that language groups as disparate as Celtic, Gothic, Sanskrit, and Old Persian might belong to the same family. It was from this stream of scholarship that the concept of a common Indo-European language began to develop, to be systematized, in the middle of the nineteenth century, by Augustus Schleicher (1821–68). Schleicher developed the notion of the tree-like growth of languages. Beginning with a primeval Indo-European language, groups diverged until seven ‘fundamentals’ emerged, one of which was Celtic; this in turn split still further, giving rise to the individual branches of Celtic such as Cornish, Welsh, and so on. The model was a convenient way of ordering the data then available and formed a significant stage in the development of Indo-European studies.

As the broad study of the Indo-European languages advanced, so too did the analysis of the Celtic languages. Theories about Insular Celtic centred on the question of folk movement. The most influential work in this field was published by Sir John RhyË†s, holder of the Chair of Celtic at Oxford University, in a wide-ranging book, *Celtic Britain*, published in 1882. In it he developed Lhuyd’s ideas by putting forward the view that the Goidelic Celts from the Continent first overcame southern Britain and thence spread to Ireland. Thereafter there was an invasion of Brythonic Celtic speakers, also from the European mainland, who forced the Goidelic settlers into western areas of Britain, some taking ship to join their distant relations in Ireland. This simple hypothesis provided a convenient basis on which linguists and archaeologists were prepared to build, until the underlying assumptions began to be challenged at the turn of the millennium.

Continental Celtic poses a rather different array of questions, since the languages nowhere survive in spoken form (with the possible exception of Breton) and are known only from comparatively few texts, augmented by a scattering of place names and proper names.

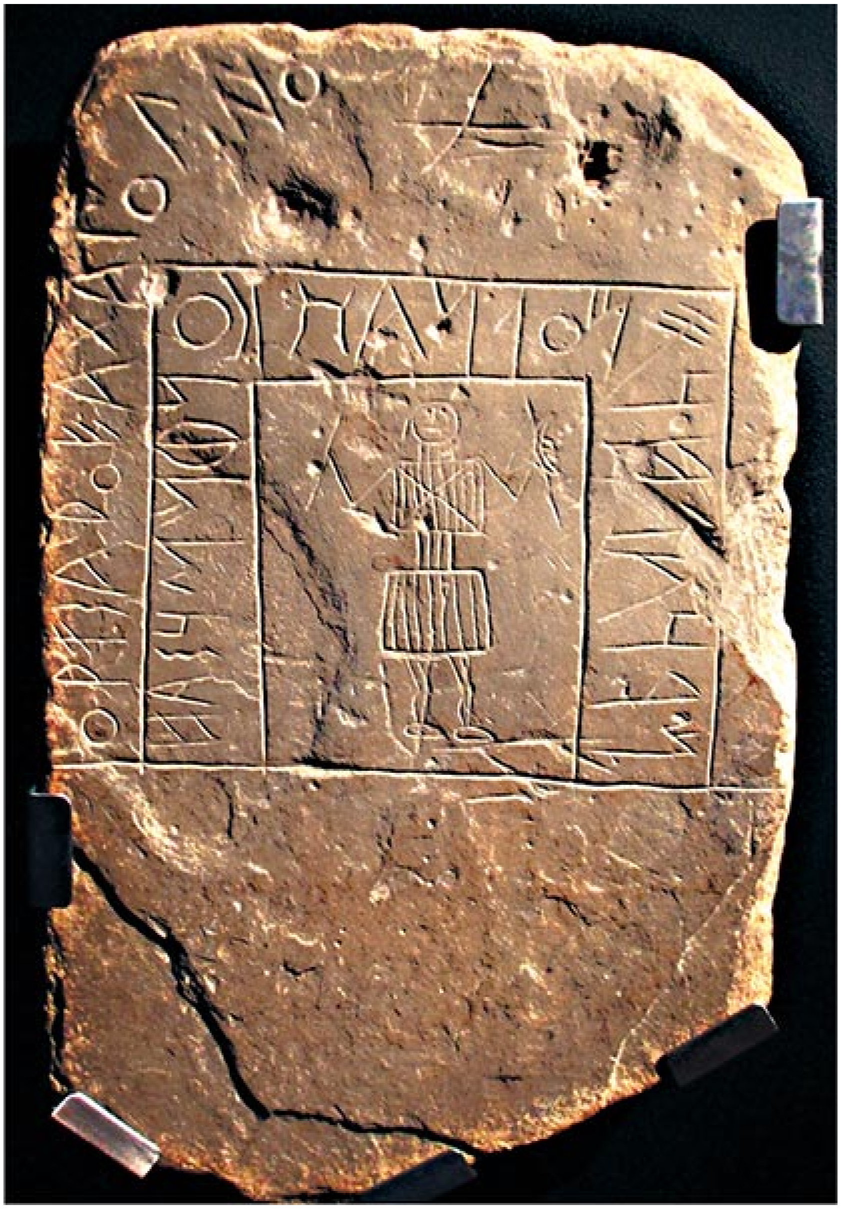
In Iberia, Celtic language studies were given a major boost by the decipherment of a long text inscribed on a bronze tablet found at Botorrita, near Saragossa, announced in 1971. This, together with the work of Antonio Tovar and others, has greatly advanced our understanding of the languages of the peninsula. Another major step forward came in 2009 when John Koch demonstrated that the language used on the inscribed stelae of south-western Iberia was Celtic, the earliest example dating back to the eighth century BC. Koch referred to them as Tartessian, but since they concentrate beyond the western edge of the Tartessian homeland it is safer to call them simply *South-western*. Indigenous non-Indo-European languages survived into classical times in the south-east as Iberian, while in the north, Basque is also the remnant of a separate and once more-extensive non-Indo-European group. The simplest explanation of these facts is to suppose that the Celtic language first appeared in Iberia in the distant past, at least by the eighth century BC and probably quite a lot earlier. We will return to these issues in Chapter 3.

It has long been recognized that Lepontic, focused around the lakes of Lombardy, was a Celtic language and that a distinctive Lepontic alphabet was used in the second and first centuries BC, but the demonstration that the Lepontic language dates back to the sixth century BC and possibly a century earlier raises a most interesting range of questions, since these early examples significantly pre-date the historic migration of Celts from north of the Alps in the early fourth century BC.

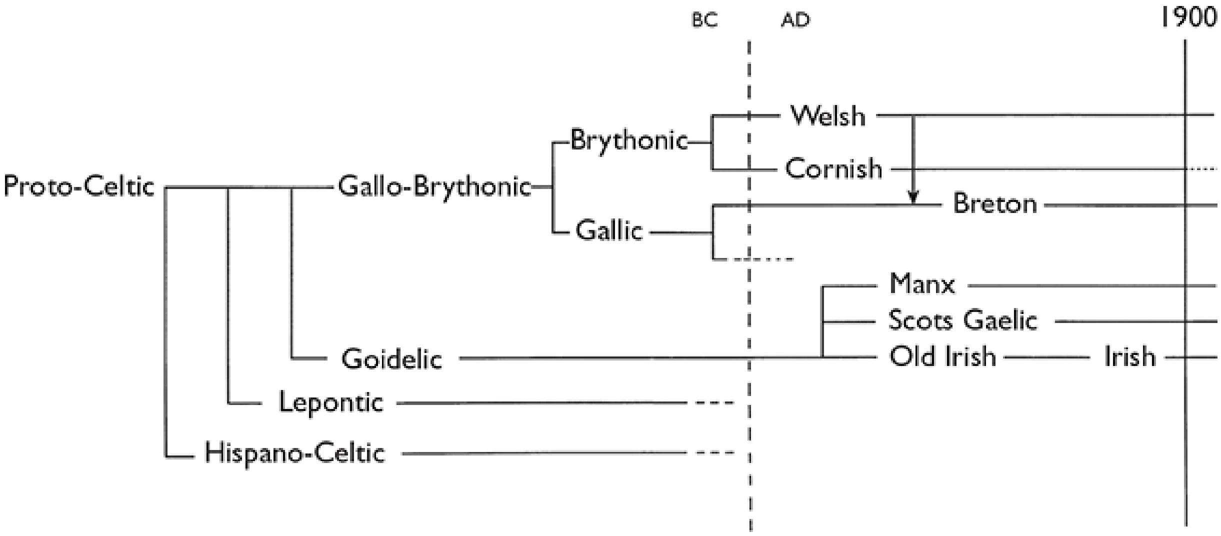
Gaulish Celtic has benefited from a long and distinguished tradition of scholarly study based on the hundred or so inscriptions and the wealth of place- and proper-name evidence. Major surveys by David Ellis Evans (1967) and Joshua Whatmough (1970) have provided full catalogues and discussions, the overriding view being that beneath a variety of dialects

Gaulish is broadly Brythonic, though some doubt has been placed on the classificatory value of the term.

Standing back from the complex and highly incomplete picture created from these linguistic scraps, one may distinguish two broad zones of Celtic, one comprising Iberia, Ireland, and the Lepontic region, where the language retained archaic characteristics, and another, including Gaul, Britain, and possibly the eastern Celtic zone, where they continued to develop. The earliest recorded use of Celtic is in the eighth century in south-western Iberia. The importance of linguistic studies for an understanding of Celtic culture is considerable, especially if it is accepted that a Celt was one who spoke Celtic. At its very simplest, it enables the uncoupling of ‘Celt’ from the archaeologically defined La Tène culture by demonstrating that the Celtic language was spoken considerably earlier than the development of La Tène culture and over a more extensive area. This raises the intriguing question of the origin of the language, which will be considered in more detail in the next chapter.



2.6 Memorial stone from Gomes Aires, southern Portugal, inscribed using the Phoenician script. The language is Celtic. The individual is carrying throwing spears of Late Bronze Age type. Museu da Escrita do Sudoeste, Almodôvar.


BC
AD
1900
Proto-Celtic
Gallo-Brythonic
Brythonic
Gallic
Welsh
Cornish
Breton
Manx
Scots Gaelic
Old Irish
Irish
Goidelic
Lepontic
Hispano-Celtic

2.7 Diagram to illustrate the possible development of the Celtic language group.

The Insular Tradition of Vernacular Literature

The warrior aristocracy of the Celts, like other warrior aristocracies throughout the pre-modern world, created and transmitted a rich oral history presented in cycles of epic narrative. In communal gatherings these epics would be recounted by storytellers to an audience keen to hear again the deeds of their ancestors and to be reminded of the nature of their gods, familiarized through stories of divine meddling in the lives of ordinary mortals. Such traditions were important in giving the community its roots and in providing models of behaviour. Above all they reinforced a sense of identity.

The survival of such epics, where they survive at all, is a matter of chance. From Continental Europe and Britain little remains of what must have been a rich and vivid corpus of tradition and belief, except for obscure and partial allusions in Celtic art, difficult now for us to interpret. But in Ireland, where native culture survived undisturbed by Romanization, a selection of this narrative tradition was eventually committed to writing and in this form has been transmitted to us across the ages.

The most extensive of the vernacular sources is the Ulster Cycle, comprising about eighty individual stories of which the most complete and by far the longest is the Cattle Raid of Cooley (*Táin Bó Cúailnge*). The rest of the corpus is made up of stories which set the scene for the central drama or expand upon the lives of the main characters.

The entire corpus is contained in ten separate manuscripts, overlapping in content. The oldest extant version of the *Táin*, known as Recension I, survives in two separate manuscripts, each providing part of the story: *The Book of the Dun Cow*, dating to the eleventh century, and *The Yellow Book of Lecan*, compiled in the fourteenth century. A fuller and more coherent version, Recension II, occurs in the late twelfth-century *Book of Leinster*. Recension I is probably based on two lost ninth-century manuscripts, and it is possible that even earlier versions, going back to the seventh century, once existed.

The *Táin* must be read to be appreciated, but the essential action focuses around a cattle raid mounted by the people of Connacht against the people of Ulster at the urging of Queen Medb—a strong-willed, promiscuous woman, prone to test the virility of male heroes—who is part mortal and part a goddess of the land. The army of Connacht is opposed by a company of aristocratic warriors, the young and headstrong Cú Chulainn, the more mature and experienced Ferghus mac Róich and Conall Cernach, the wise Sencha mac Ailella, and the two-faced scheming Bricriu the ‘Poison-tongue’, who sets men against each other to advance his own interests. As the story unfolds, we are introduced to many scenes and actions reflecting behaviour familiar through the ethnographic works of Poseidonius and Caesar: feasting and the hero’s portion, chariot warfare, single combat, severed heads, joint dowries of husbands and wives, fosterage, and above all the ethics and motivations of a warrior aristocracy for whom raiding was a commonplace.

These similarities have long been recognized and commented upon. The most influential work has been Kenneth Jackson’s *The Oldest Irish Tradition: A Window on the Iron Age*, published in 1964, in which he argued that the Ulster tales reflected an Irish ethnographic present of the fourth century AD, which in turn gave direct access to an earlier Celtic society. The situation is, however, more complex. The Ulster Cycle undoubtedly contains elements of an ancient folk tradition, but it was composed in its final form by Christian monks with a considerable knowledge of Greek and Roman literature as well as the Scriptures and other Christian writings. Thus, while it might be tempting to argue that similarities to the Homeric epics reflect a common European origin, it may be more reasonable to suppose that the Homeric allusions were inserted by the highly educated medieval redactors. There are, therefore, real dangers of being led astray by false archaisms.

A detailed study of the 'material culture' represented in the Ulster Cycle has led James Mallory to the indisputable conclusions that the constant reference to silver among the prestigious items depicted must be a reflection of the broader world experience of Ireland in the sixth to ninth centuries AD and thus has no bearing at all on the culture of the La Tène period. In his words, 'The material culture of the Ulster Cycle is essentially a "(Window on the Dark Ages)".'

Given, then, that the medieval Christian redactors were responsible for creating the text which has come down to us, by presenting an epic tradition in the light of their own scholarly erudition and a desire to preserve a memory of the splendours of their more recent past, how much of the pre-Christian tradition survives? It is tempting to take the easy way out and to argue that the basic material that was moulded, redecorated, and to some extent repackaged by the succession of saga tellers and saga writers throughout the first millennium BC—the same tradition that is visible in dismembered scraps in the surviving writings of the classical historians and geographers.

There is, however, a slightly unnerving disparity between the archaeological record in Ireland and aspects of warfare central to the action of the epic. Two items in particular stand out: the sword and the chariot. In the Ulster Cycle the heroes use massive slashing swords and are driven to battle on light war chariots; cavalry is not mentioned at all. All of this would be quite acceptable in parts of Continental Europe in the fourth or third century BC, but the archaeological record of Ireland has produced no large slashing swords of this type, and no chariot fittings, such as terret rings, strap fasteners, linchpins, hub rings, and iron tyres of the types which commonly recur in Britain and on the Continent. The word constantly employed for the vehicle used in the hero tales is *carpat*, which elsewhere is used to describe transport or travelling vehicles with two wooden seats, one for the driver, the other for the passenger. From brief textual references it would seem that this was an indigenous vehicle totally different from the war chariot of Britain and Gaul. It remains, therefore, a strong possibility that the core of the epics, deeply embedded within the Ulster Cycle, lies in a Continental European tradition which was transmitted at some stage to Ireland, there to be woven into a network of indigenous folk tales in a local geographical and technological setting to which was added a sprinkling of real history. Thereafter, the tales were constantly modified, in each retelling taking on some new aspect, material or conceptual, gleaned from the contemporary world, until their final editing in the medieval period in a form suitable for Christian consumption.

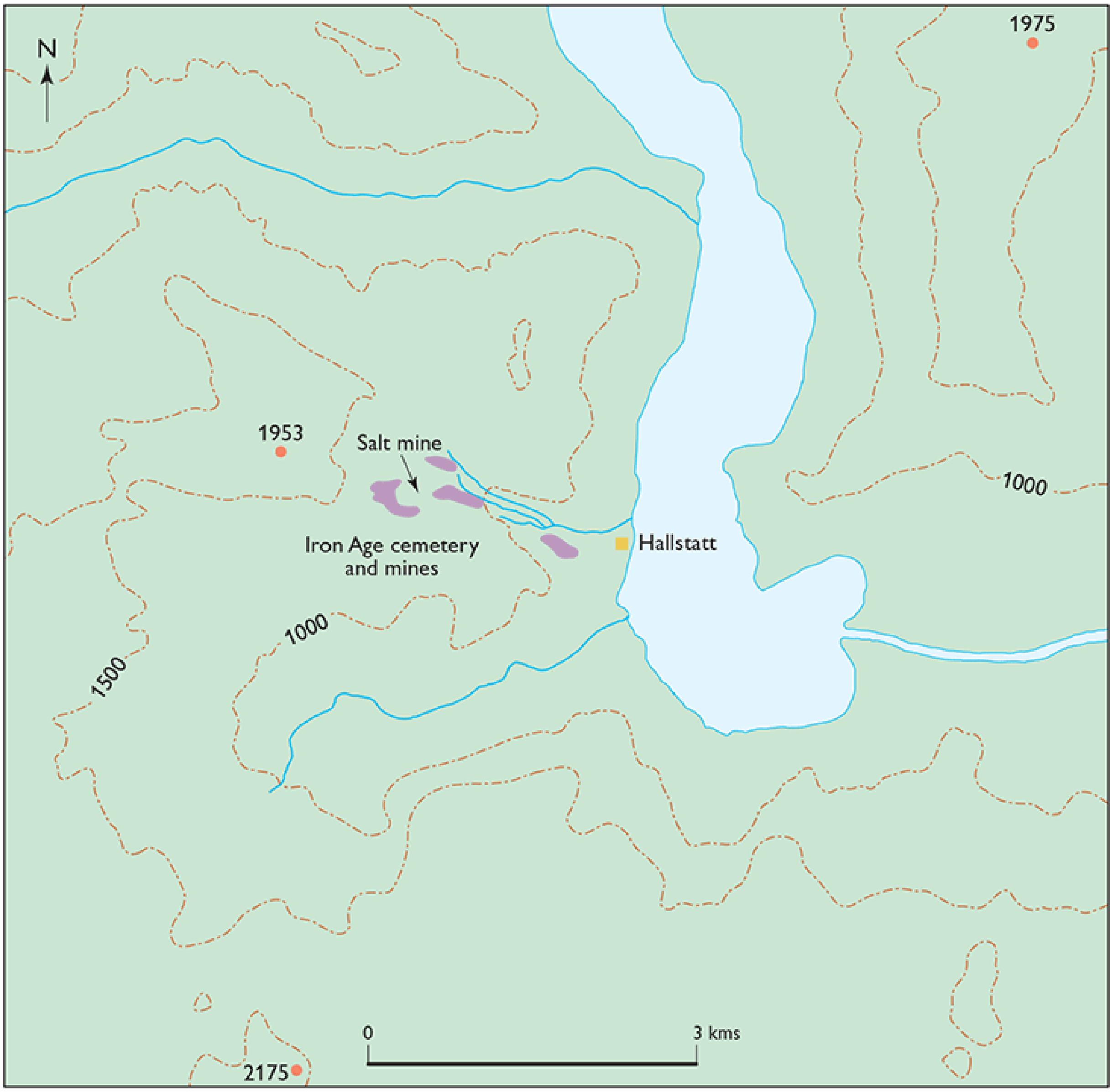
This said, the Ulster Cycle is a remarkable survival providing a tantalizing glimpse of the rich epic tradition of Celtic Europe which would otherwise be totally inaccessible.

Another source of considerable interest is the Old Irish law texts, the majority of which originate in the seventh and eighth centuries AD and come down to us in varying states of corruption or incompleteness in documents of late medieval date. From these it is possible to gain an intimate insight into the working of society: rank, kin groupings, personal relationships, property, offences and punishment, contracts and pledges, and the teaching and maintenance of the law itself. No doubt, embedded within all this are rules of behaviour which date back to the time of the earlier populations of Ireland, but to tease out these early threads is an uncertain, perhaps impossible, task. At best the law tracts may be viewed as a distant and distorted echo of a past era.

2.8 Johann Georg Ramsauer, a government director of mining, who, in 1846, discovered the Iron Age cemetery at Hallstatt in Austria and continued excavating it until 1863.

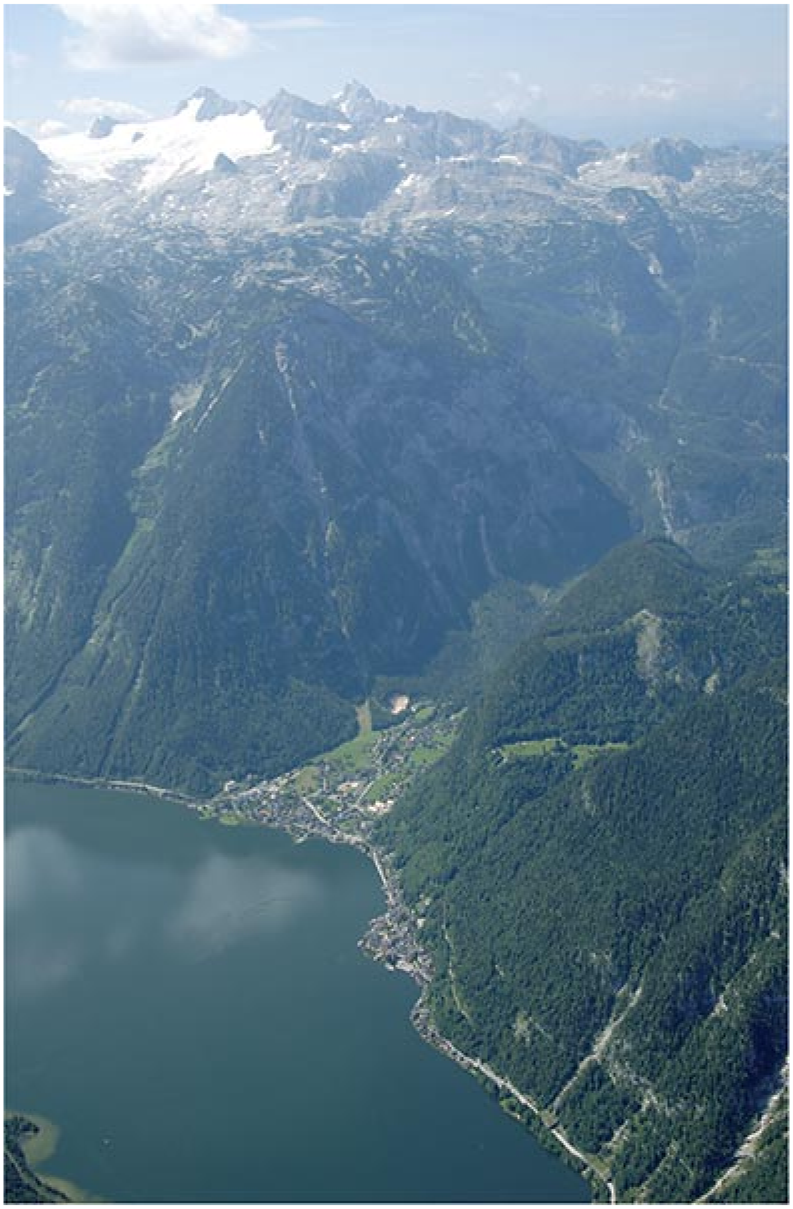
Archaeology

The contribution of archaeology to the study of the Celts has been considerable. From the sixteenth century large numbers of antiquities were published and variously ascribed as ‘British’, ‘Gaulish’, or ‘Celtic’. Many were indeed of Iron Age date, but at first correct designations were achieved more by luck than through knowledge. Systematization began early in the nineteenth century with the work of the Danish archaeologist C. J. Thomsen (1788–1865), who is credited with the creation of the Three Age model through his arrangement of the collections of the Danish National Museum into items of Stone, Bronze, and Iron, which he presented as three developmental stages applicable to the prehistory of the whole of Europe. Thomsen's work was further elaborated by his assistant J. J. A. Worsaae (1821–85), who, by stratigraphical excavations, was able to demonstrate its general validity.

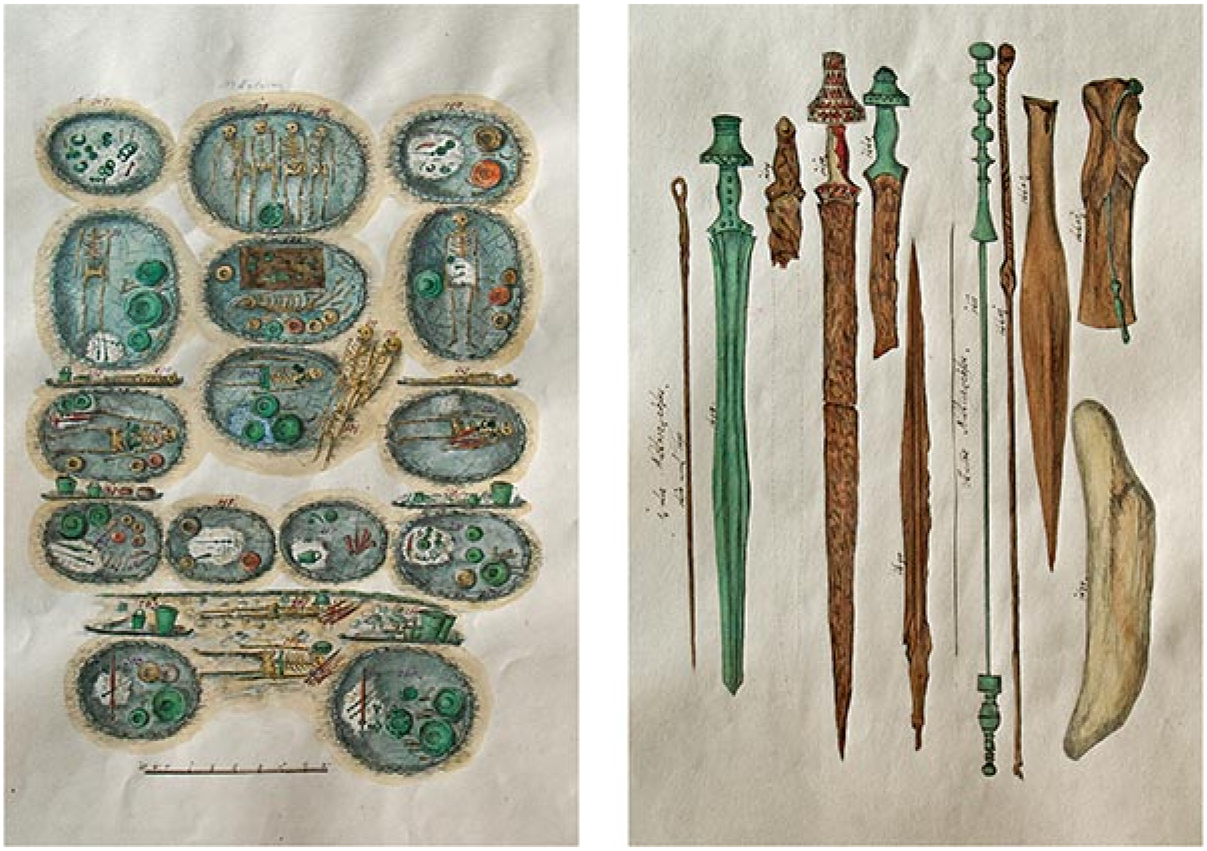

N
1975
1953
Salt mine
Iron Age cemetery
and mines
Hallstatt
1000
1000
1500
0
3 kms
2175

2.9 The location of the settlement and salt mines of Hallstatt, Austria.

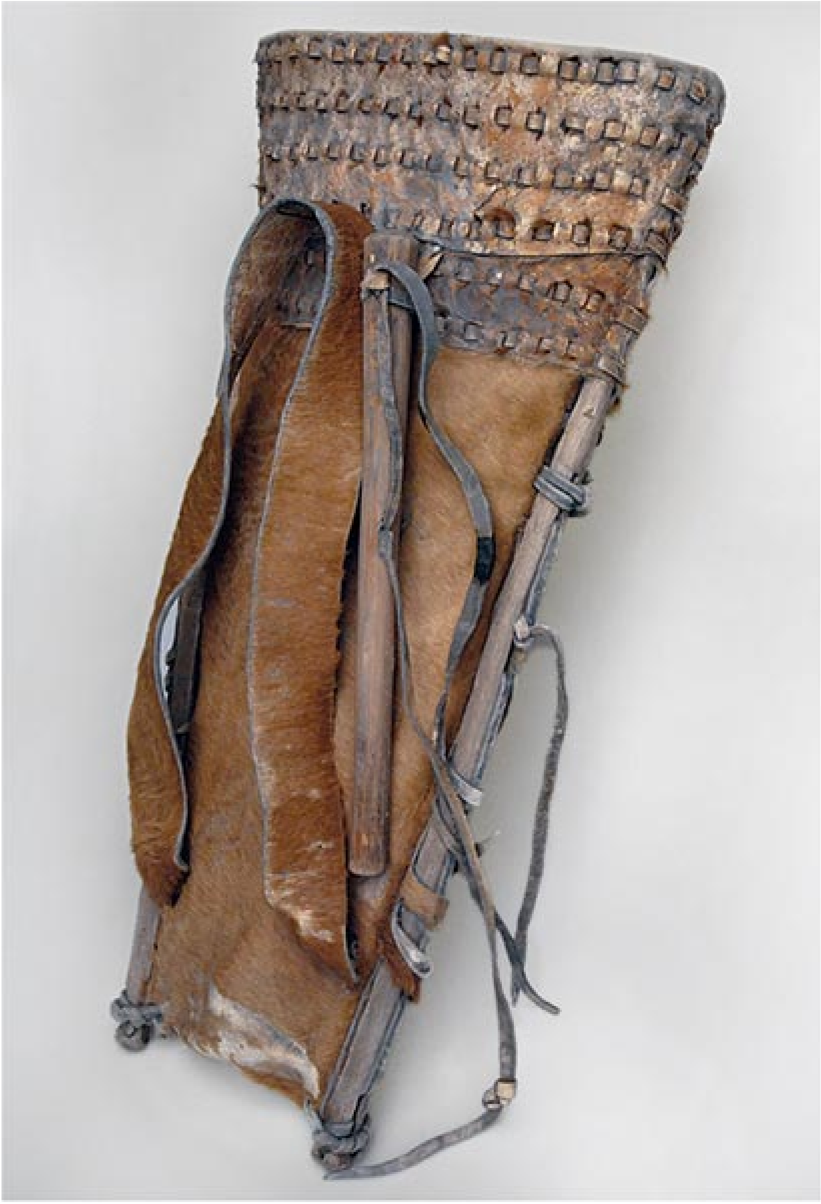
By the 1840s it was possible to make a broad correlation between the material culture of the Iron Age and that of the Celts in those areas of Europe where the classical sources indicated the Celts to have lived. Thus, when Johann Georg Ramsauer began to excavate an extensive cemetery at Hallstatt in Austria in 1846, he was simply following convention by calling the graves he found ‘Celtic’. Excavations at Hallstatt continued until 1863, by which time about 1,000 graves had been opened and meticulously recorded in a series of fine watercolour sketches drawn by the excavator. For the most part the graves, both cremations and inhumations, were well furnished with artefacts, including an array of weapons, bronze and ceramic vessels, and personal equipment and jewellery. This enormous collection, together with well-preserved organic material, such as clothing and wooden tools, recovered from the neighbouring salt mines, provided the archaeological world with a detailed insight into the material culture of the central European Iron Age. Most of the Hallstatt graves belonged to the period spanning the seventh and sixth centuries bc, with a few continuing into the early fifth. Thereafter the importance of Hallstatt declined rapidly, as the salt deposits at Dürrnberg began to be developed.



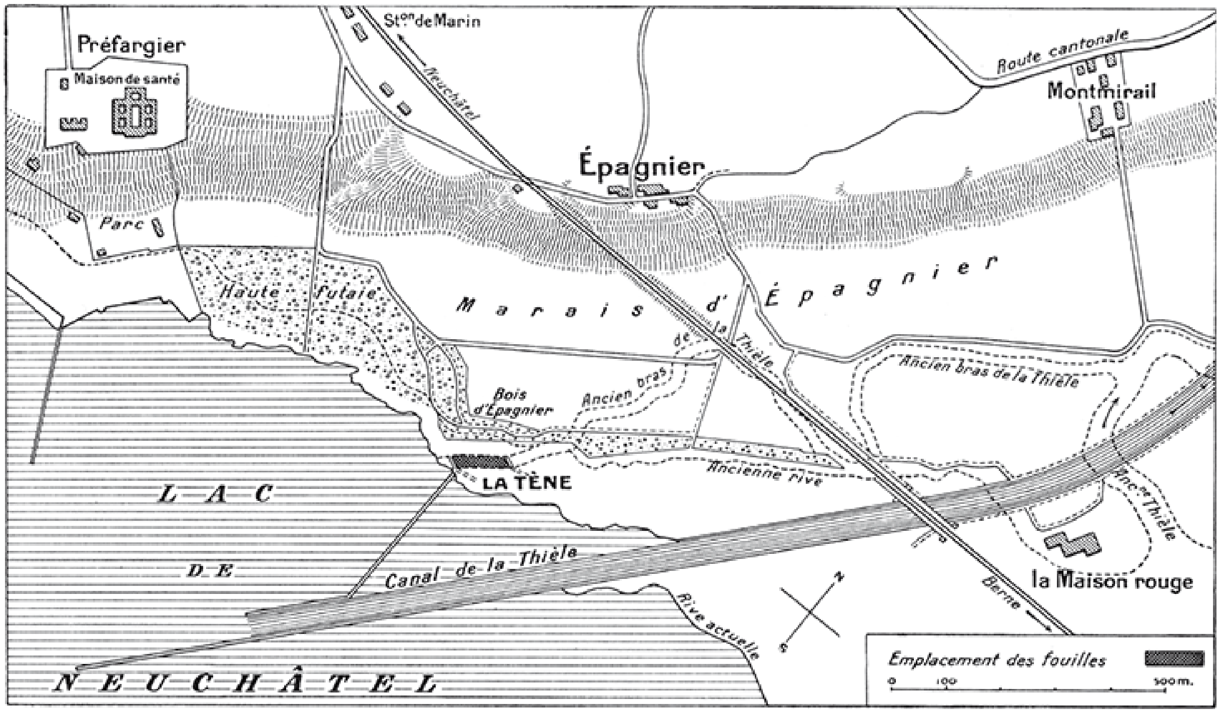
2.10 (*Right*) Aerial view of the site of Hallstatt, Austria. The cemetery and salt mines lay in the valley behind the lakeside settlement.



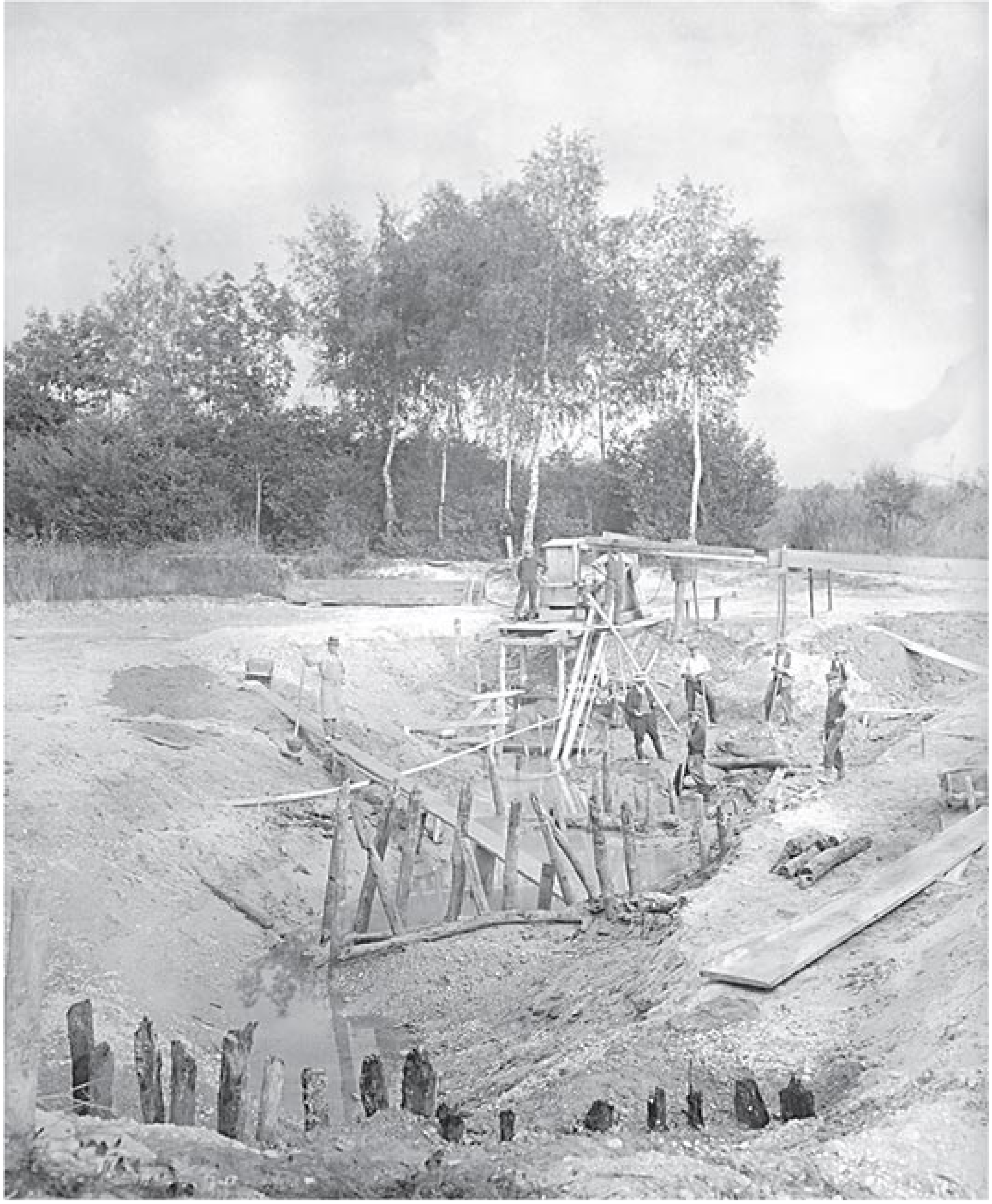
2.11 (*Below left and centre*) Johann Georg Ramsauer conducted the excavations at the cemetery at Hallstatt with some skill, recording each individual burial complete with grave goods in meticulously detailed watercolours. Library of the Society of Antiquaries, London.



2.12 (*Below right*) A rucksack made from leather over a wooden frame preserved in the salt mines at Hallstatt, Austria, dating to the sixth century BC. The sack was probably used by a miner to carry rock salt. Naturhistorisches Museum, Vienna.

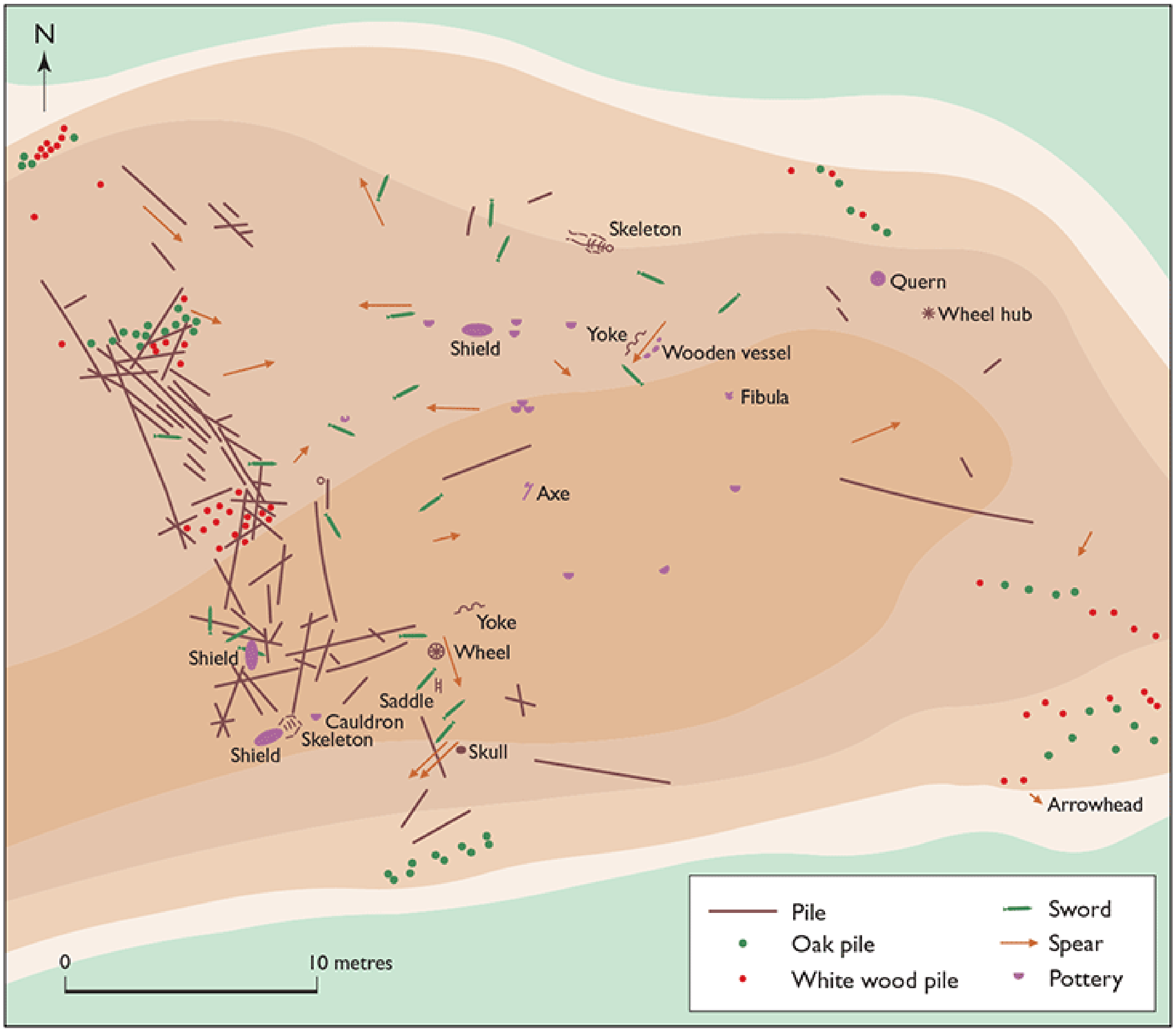

Préfargier
Maison de santé
Parc
Stᵒⁿ de Marin
Neuchâtel
Épagnier
Route cantonale
Montmirail
Haute Futaie
Marais d'Épagnier
de la Thièle
Ancien bras de la Thièle
Bois d'Epagnier
Ancien bras
Ancienne rive
LA TÈNE
LAC DE NEUCHÂTEL
Canal de la Thièle
Rive actuelle
Berne
Ancⁿᵉ Thièle
la Maison rouge
N
S
Emplacement des fouilles
0
100
500 m.

2.13 The location of the site of La Tène on Lake Neuchâtel, Switzerland. This is Paul Vouga's plan, published in 1923.



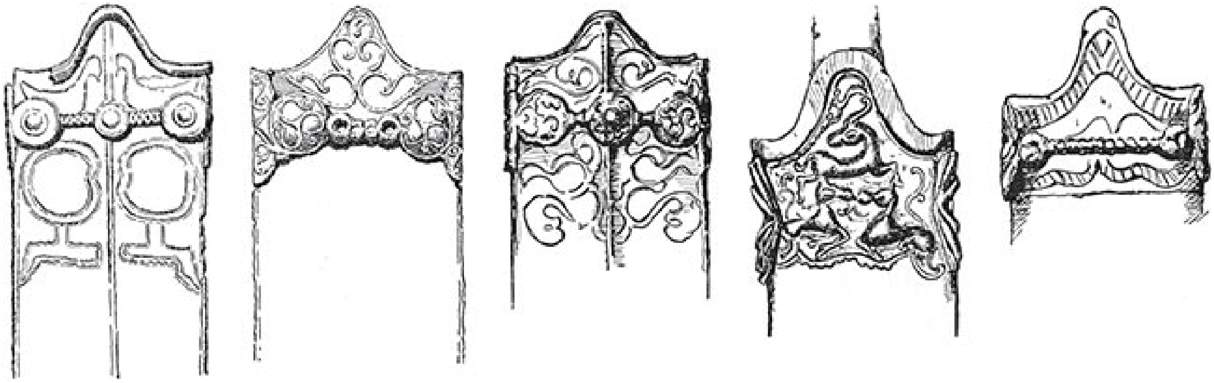
2.14 Excavations at La Tène, Neuchâtel, Switzerland, 1916, showing the timbers of a bridge, named after the excavator as Le Pont Vouga.

In 1857, at the north-western corner of Lake Neuchâtel in Switzerland, a local collector, Hansli Kopp, discovered a series of wooden piles and, groping in the mud between them, located about forty iron weapons. Thus began the exploration of the famous site of La Tène, which continued sporadically until 1917. La Tène is an enigmatic site which has variously been interpreted as a pile dwelling, a fortified *oppidum*, a bridge overwhelmed in a catastrophe, and a platform from which ritual depositions were made. Its fame lies in the extremely large collection of artefacts which have been gathered as a result of the various excavations. The assemblage is particularly rich in weapons—swords, spears, and shields—but also includes a number of smaller personal items, such as fibulae, belt clasps, and razors, as well as bronze vessels, iron ingots, and parts of vehicles. The finds became widely known in the 1860s, largely as a result of Ferdinand Keller’s publication, in which he presented La Tène as a lake village of the Celtic period. It was soon realized that they differed markedly in form and therefore age from the material which had been recovered on the other side of the Alps at Hallstatt, but were similar to other finds coming to light in cemetery excavations in northern France.


N
Skeleton
Quern
Wheel hub
Shield
Yoke
Wooden vessel
Fibula
Axe
Yoke
Wheel
Shield
Saddle
Cauldron
Skeleton
Shield
Skull
Arrowhead
0
10 metres
Pile
Oak pile
White wood pile
Sword
Spear
Pottery

2.15 Plan of the timber structure and votive deposits unearthed at La Tène. Based on part of Paul Vouga's original excavation plan, published in 1923.

In 1871 the International Congress of Prehistoric Anthropology and Archaeology was held at Bologna. Among the delegates were Gabriel de Mortillet from France and Ã‰mile Desor from Switzerland; both had a detailed knowledge of Iron Age material, de Mortillet having worked with finds from cemeteries in Champagne and Desor at Neuchâtel. During the congress they were able to view material recovered from a cemetery recently excavated towards the edge of the Etruscan city of Marzabotto. The finds were closely similar to those with which they were familiar and left the two men in no doubt that the Marzabotto burials were of Celts who had crossed the Alps to settle in the Po valley, just as Livy and Polybius had described. The recognition meant that, from then on, archaeological finds of La Tène type came to be regarded as the material culture of the Celts. Moreover, the correlation provided a convenient dating horizon, assuming the chronology of the classical sources to be correct.

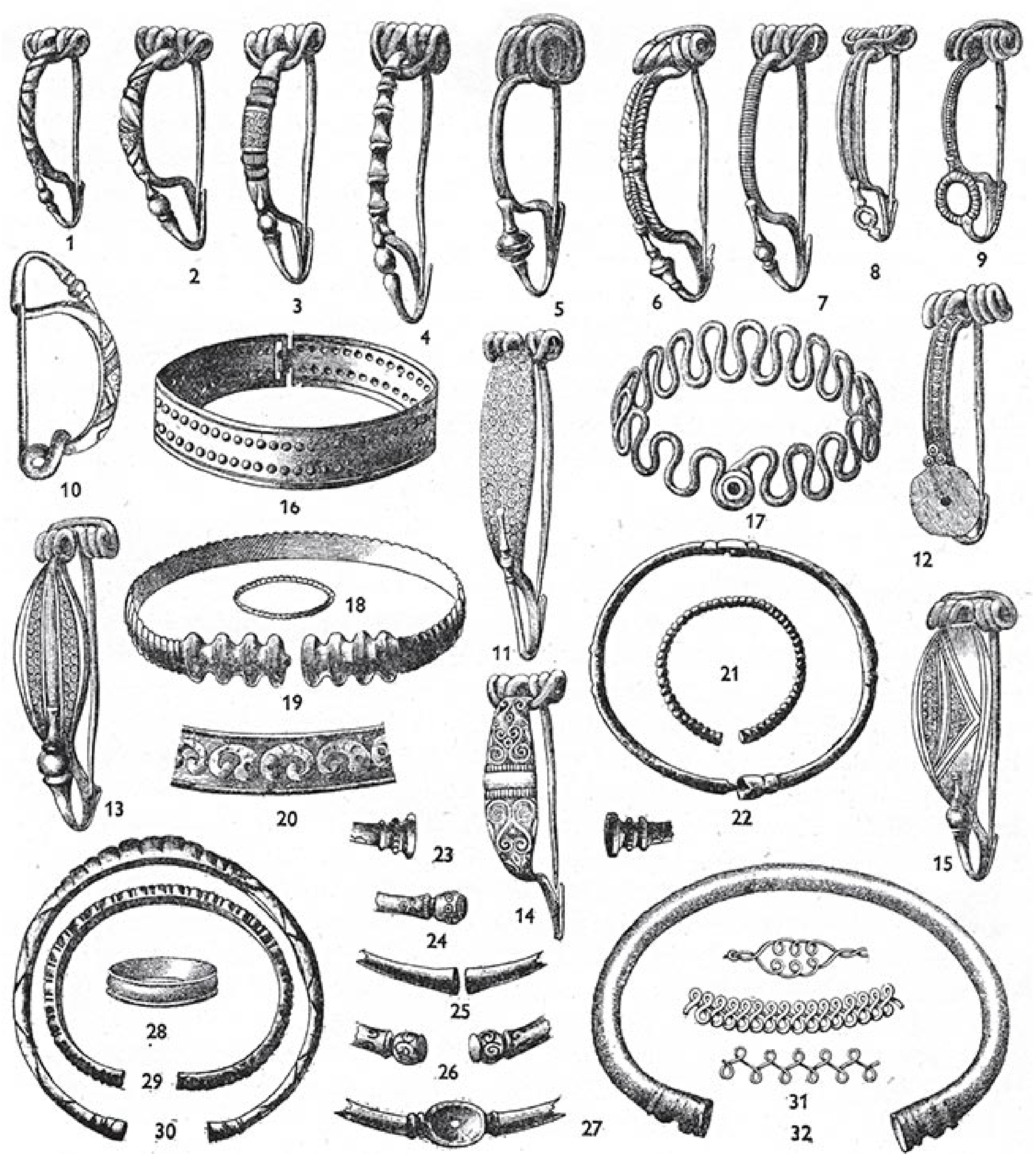


2.16 A selection of the decorated sword scabbards discovered at La Tène and illustrated in the excavation report, *La Tène,* by Paul Vouga, published in 1923.

In 1872, the year following the Bologna conference, the Swedish archaeologist Hans Hildebrand proposed systematizing the European Iron Age by dividing it into two parts, the earlier characterized by the finds from the Hallstatt cemetery, and the later by those from La Tène. Henceforth the concepts of a Hallstatt culture and a La Tène culture came widely into use, with the La Tène culture being regarded as the archaeological expression of the Celts.

Subsequently the scheme was modified by subdivision. In 1881 Otto Tischler divided the Hallstatt period into two phases, Early and Late, and then turned his attention to the La Tène material and in 1885, following the discovery of a votive deposit at Duchcov, Bohemia, in 1882, proposed a threefold division into Early, Middle, and Late, or I, II, and III. The Early phase was characterized by fibulae (safety-pin-shaped clasps) whose recurved feet simply touched the bow; the contemporary swords were short with the scabbard chapes perforated. In the Middle phase the fibulae had developed so that the foot wrapped around the bow, while the sword sheaths now had unperforated chapes. The Late phase was characterized by fibulae with solid catch plates, often perforated. The contemporary swords were much longer with rounded ends.

Tischler’s system was widely used, and by the turn of the century firm dates were being proposed. Thus, for France, Oscar Montelius suggested that La Tène I should be dated 400–250, II, 250–150, and III, 150–1 BC. Joseph Déchelette argued that a period IV should be added to contain the later British material. In Switzerland the careful excavation of the cemetery at MÃ¼nsingen and elsewhere allowed further subdivisions to be made by David Viollier in 1916; La Tène I was thereafter divided into a, b, and c and La Tène II into a and b.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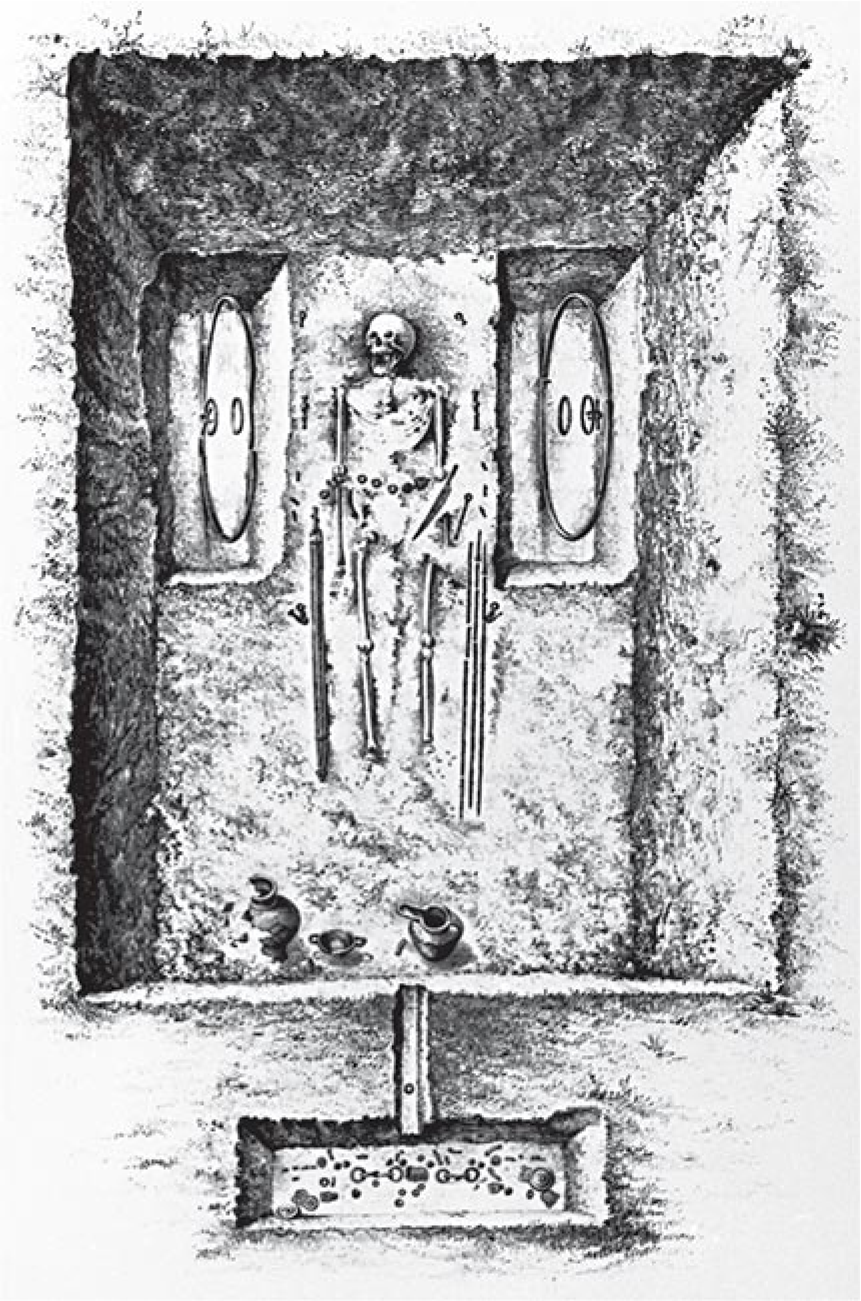
2.17 Early La Tène metalwork from the hoard found at Duchcov in Bohemia in 1882, from the original publication.

While the Tischler scheme worked well for Champagne, Switzerland, and Bohemia, the material from Bavaria posed problems, because here an early phase of burials, usually under tumuli, was identified. To contain these, in 1902 Paul Reinecke proposed that this assemblage, dating to the fifth century BC, should be recognized as a distinct phase known as La Tène A. Thereafter his La Tène B, C, and D approximately equated with Tischler's Early, Middle, and Late. This was a significant amendment in that it gave recognition to the formative phase of the La Tène culture, predating the period of the migration. Reinecke also subdivided the Hallstatt culture, giving specific recognition to its Bronze Age origins (his Hallstatt A and B), allowing C and D to represent the two stages of the Early Iron Age. In Britain, throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Iron Age material was simply designated 'Late Keltic' or 'Early British' without subdivision, following the suggestion of Augustus Franks in 1863, though in the first decade of the twentieth century some attempts were made to link the Insular finds to the Continental scheme. It is the Reinecke system of 1902, with many subdivisions, regional variants, and chronological adjustments, that has underpinned Iron Age studies thereafter.



2.18 Plan of the chieftain’s burial found at Somme-Bionne, Marne, France, and dating to the late fifth century BC. The chieftain was laid on a two-wheeled vehicle and was accompanied by his weapons, feasting gear, and horse trappings. It was excavated in 1873.

The systematizing of the European Iron Age in the late nineteenth century was, to a large extent, driven by the flood of new material deriving from the excavation of cemeteries, which provided a favourite focus of activity for collectors and archaeologists. In France a lead was provided by

Louis Napoleon (1808–73), who became President of the Second Republic in 1852, assuming the title of Napoleon III after a coup d’état established the Second Empire a year earlier. Napoleon’s scholarly concern with the campaigns of Julius Caesar led him to take an active interest in the casual discoveries that were being made in Champagne when, each summer, he spent time at the military base at Châlon. From material given to him and bought from the local peasants, and obtained from excavations which he ordered, he built up a large collection which was to form the basis of the Musée des Antiquités nationales in Paris.

Among the other collectors inspired by the emperor’s example were Frédéric Moreau (1798–1898) and Léon Morel (1828–1909). Moreau carried out extensive excavations in the Aisne and Marne region from 1873 to 1893, and the large collection of La Tène material which he accumulated, and in part published, was given to the National Museum in 1899. Morel’s interest in archaeology began in 1863, when he became involved in a La Tène cemetery at Somsois, near Vitry-le-François. Thereafter he continued to excavate in Champagne until his death, except for a brief period (1879–88) when his work took him to Provence. The collection which Morel amassed, and published in *La Champagne souterraine* in 1898, was second in quality only to that of the National Museum at Saint-Germain-en-Laye. When eventually it was put up for sale in 1901, it was considered to be too expensive by the French government and was eventually purchased by the British Museum. Among the most important assemblages is that from the fifth-century chieftain’s burial at Somme-Bionne.

The frenetic activity in the Marne, Aisne, and Ardennes regions between 1865 and 1914, most of it carried out by peasants on behalf of local collectors, brought to light many thousands of graves from hundreds of cemeteries. This corpus of material inevitably contributed significantly to the understanding of the Celts, particularly of their burial practices. Comparable, though less intensive, work was under way at this time in other parts of Europe. In Slovenia, for example, in the decade before the First World War, the Grand Duchess of Mecklenburg was instrumental in encouraging the excavation of cemeteries at Magdalenska gora, Stična, and Vinica, uncovering more than 870 graves, and also at Hallstatt itself in 1907. The Mecklenburg collection, which was eventually acquired by the

Peabody Museum in Harvard, is among one of the most important for understanding the development of Iron Age societies in the eastern Alps.

2.19 The Grand Duchess of Mecklenburg was an enthusiastic archaeologist. She was born in Carniola (now Slovenia) in 1856. Between 1905 and 1914 she spent a considerable part of her fortune conducting excavations on Iron Age cemeteries at Hallstatt, Stična, Magdalenska gora, Vinica, and elsewhere, amassing a collection of some 20,000 artefacts.

Much of the archaeological activity of the last half of the nineteenth century was directed towards the examination of cemeteries. These were, after all, the sites that produced collectable artefacts with a market value, but some attention was also being given to settlement sites, in particular to the large *oppida*. Of these, Stradonice, in Bohemia, provides one of the most notorious examples. During the last quarter of the nineteenth century it was dug over at the instigation of antique dealers, the artefacts being dispersed throughout Europe while the local peasants found a ready market for the animal bone refuse recovered, selling it for the production of bonemeal. The discovery of a hoard of gold coins in 1877 increased interest still further. In all it is estimated that between 80,000 and 100,000 items were recovered, mostly belonging to the late second and first centuries BC. Some flavour of the importance of the collection began to dawn on the academic world following the publication of some of the material by J. L. PicÂ´ in 1903.

Interest in *oppida* in France was initiated by Napoleon III, whose study of the campaigns of Julius Caesar naturally led him to select for attention Bibracte, the capital of the Aedui, situated on Mont Beuvray near Autun. In 1867 he appointed J.-G. Bulliot to direct the work, which was eventually published in 1899 as *Fouilles de Mont Beuvray 1867 Ã 1895*. Bulliot was succeeded by his nephew Joseph Déchelette, who was to become one of Europe’s most influential scholars of the Iron Age before his death in the First World War at the age of 53. By that time Déchelette had published the two Iron Age volumes of his *Manuel d’archéologie*, a work of synthesis which summed up the advances of the great period of discovery 1860–1910 and presented the culture of the *oppida*, visible through the work at Stradonice and Mont Beuvray, in its proper context as the culmination of the Celtic achievement.

The publication of *Le Second Âge du fer*—the third part of the second volume of Déchelette’s *Manuel d’archéologie*—in 1914 marks the end of the pioneering phase of Celtic archaeology. Twenty years before, A. Bertrand and S. Reinach had presented an array of material in their *Les Celtes dans les vallées du Pô et du Danube* (1894), but the *Manuel* provided the first European-wide synthesis of La Tène material culture, demonstrating the remarkable similarities which could be detected from one side of Europe to the other. It was now possible for scholars to begin to integrate the classical and archaeological data, providing pan-European syntheses of which the two volumes of Henri Hubert, *Les Celtes et l’expansion celtique jusqu’Ã l’époque de La Tène* and *Les Celtes depuis l’époque de La Tène et la civilisation celtique* (both 1932), were among the most ambitious.

Celtic Art

In some ways it is surprising that the awareness of the importance of Celtic art did not develop significantly during this formative period, but this may, at least in part, have been due to the dismissive attitudes of art historians, whose sense of values was narrowly constrained by the products of the Graeco-Roman world. The first real appreciation of the distinctive identity of Celtic art appeared in 1863, when Augustus Wollaston Franks (1826–97), who became Keeper of the Department of British and Medieval Antiquities and Ethnography at the British Museum (1866–96) after joining the staff in 1851, published a collection of British masterpieces in John Kemble's *Horae Ferales* (1863). These he described as 'Late Keltic', offering a consideration of them in their European context. In doing this he was far in advance of the thinking of his Continental contemporaries, most of whom would have subscribed to the belief that barbarians were incapable of producing significant works of art.

There was, however, a developing awareness of the part played by the classical world in introducing artistic concepts to the Celtic barbarians north of the Alps. The importance of the Rhône route, via Massalia, was generally accepted, and in 1875 Hermann Genthe published a work stressing the significance of the Alpine passes for the transport of Etruscan goods and ideas to the north. Five years earlier Ernst Werth had identified Etruscan inspiration in the 'Gaulish' metalwork found in the aristocratic burial at Waldalgesheim, and in 1889 the classical archaeologist Adolf Furtwängler offered an analysis of the Celtic art represented in rich grave finds from Schwarzenbach, preferring to see the exotic items as Massiliot products designed for the barbarian market. This view was still adhered to by Paul Reinecke in his publication of 1902. It followed the reasoning of art historians working on material around the Black Sea interface, who believed that many of the Scythian masterpieces had been produced in Greek workshops located in the coastal colonial settlements, specifically for the Scythian aristocracy.

Meanwhile, in Britain an alternative view was developing which saw Celtic art not as a pale, ill-mannered reflection of classical art but as an original creation. These ideas were elegantly summarized by Sir Arthur Evans in *The Origins of Celtic Art*, based on a series of lectures given in 1895. Evans's view was that Celtic art emerged from the interaction of a number of cultural influences. He acknowledged the contribution of Etruscan and Greek ideas but argued that Hallstatt elements from the eastern Alpine area, as well as Scythian motifs from further east, were also integral to what eventually emerged.

Evans’s thesis formed the starting-point of the monumental survey undertaken by Paul Jacobsthal, Professor of Classical Archaeology at Marburg University (1912–35) and thereafter a scholar at Oxford University. Jacobsthal began his study of Celtic art in 1921 and published his seminal *Early Celtic Art*, the first volume of what he planned to be a three-volume work, in 1944. In it he recognized three principal Continental styles. His ‘Early Style’ was an aristocratic art confined to the high-status burials of the fifth and early fourth centuries BC. Here he detected native Hallstatt elements as well as the influence of an eastern nomadic, or ‘orientalizing’, trend adding to the more obvious classical input. His second style, named after the Waldalgesheim burial, used classical floral patterns as the basis, from which was developed an original treatment of plant motifs. In the early third century the third style emerged, divided into two sub-styles, a ‘Plastic Style’, in which motifs were used in an essentially three-dimensional mode, and a ‘Sword Style’, involving inscribing and some embossing to create two-dimensional patterns.

The importance of Jacobsthal’s work was that it established Celtic art as one of the great artistic achievements of Europe, with an originality and vitality which owed little to the formulaic inspiration which the Celtic masters undoubtedly received from the classical world.

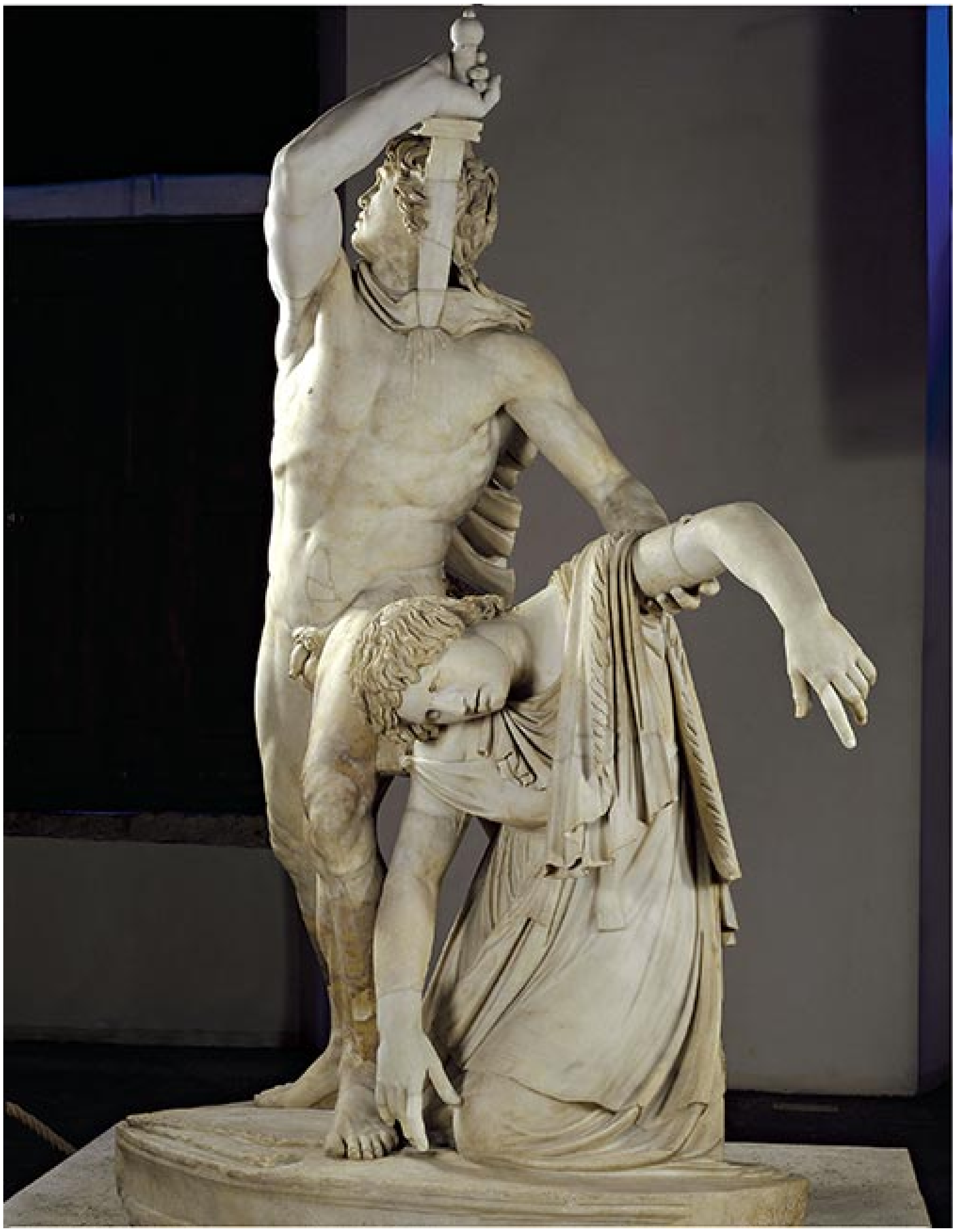
> We are told that the Gauls were valiant, quarrelsome, cruel, superstitious, and had the gift of pointed speech: their art also is full of contrasts. It is attractive and repellent; it is far from primitiveness and simplicity, is refined in thought and technique; elaborate and clever; full of paradoxes, restless, puzzlingly ambiguous; rational and irrational; dark and uncanny—far from the lovable humanity and transparency of Greek art. Yet, it is a real style, the first great contribution by the barbarians to European arts, the first great chapter in the everlasting mutual stock-taking of Southern, Northern and Eastern forces in the life of Europe.

Although his ‘Styles’ still provide a convenient general model, they are classificatory rather than explanatory. With a greatly enlarged corpus from which to work and a deepening understanding of the nature of artistic expression in pre-modern society, the study of Celtic art promises to become one of the more lively areas of debate.

Celtic Culture

The publication of *Early Celtic Art* in 1944 can be regarded as the point at which the broad range of Celtic studies at last came of age—when the uniqueness of the Celts was firmly and finally established. The second half of the twentieth century and the early decades of the twenty-first have seen major advances in all fields but none more than in archaeology. It would be impossible to review fully the achievements of this remarkable period of activity. The sheer quantity of material recovered has increased the database exponentially, but what is more important is the far greater attention that has been placed on context—the nature of the site itself, whether it be a cemetery or a settlement. There has also been, at least in some parts of Europe, a concern to see the site as an element in a landscape and to use this larger geographical concept as the unit of study. Human communities are only one of the elements of the biome, and to understand these the entire system must be studied.

In parallel with all this there has been a growing willingness, as the discipline moves away from its traditional nineteenth-century artefact-based focus, to see the values and approaches of anthropology as being of crucial relevance to archaeology. The archaeologist's concern now lies in attempting to model and to understand the different systems which make up a society, and by examining the interactions of these systems, to approach the fascinating dynamic of social change. Increasingly the archaeologist, like the anthropologist, is being drawn into considerations of communication through symbols, art, language, and oral traditions. In this way the disparate threads which make up our understanding of the Celtic peoples—defined through the disciplines of archaeology, art history, linguistics, and history—are now, at last, being drawn together in a single study. It remains to be seen what will emerge.



3

In the Beginning

5500–1300 BC

THE first recorded use of the name Celt is by the Greek geographer Hecataeus, writing in the sixth century BC. Since then the word has acquired a variety of meanings, leading to considerable confusion. For the purposes of this book a Celt will be considered to be a person who spoke the Celtic language. This may sound straightforward, but not so, for many people in the past may have spoken more than a single language, one in their immediate community and another for communication with more distant neighbours. If Celtic was the language of the family, then they might reasonably be regarded as Celts, but if they used Celtic only as a lingua franca to facilitate external interactions, then should they be called Celts? Probably not. Exogamous marriage will also have added to the mix of languages spoken in any one area. Even more complex is what happens to language at times of migration. It is highly probable the Celtic hordes who attacked Delphi in 279 BC, some of whom went on to settle in Asia Minor, included peoples of different ethnic origin speaking different languages. That they owed allegiance to Celtic tribal leaders and probably used Celtic as the language of command would have suggested to contemporary observers a greater ethnic unity than in reality there was. These are complex issues of the kind with which we are familiar in our modern globalized lives, but such subtle distinctions are difficult to identify when dealing with the more distant past. Thus, while the simple contention that a Celt is one who normally spoke Celtic is far from perfect, it offers a workable generalization.

Then the question arises, what is the Celtic language? As we saw in the last chapter, the antiquarian Edward Lhuyd, working at the turn of the eighteenth century, had recognized the similarity between a number of contemporary languages spoken in the extreme west of Europe, in Brittany, Cornwall, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland, and decided to call them 'Celtic'. He could equally have chosen to classify them as 'Atlantian' or 'language group A' but he chose the term Celtic to stress the ethnic and historical difference he believed there to be between the people of these remote Atlantic regions and the English and French, and because he was aware that archaic forms of these languages had been spoken in France before the Roman conquest, when the indigenous population was referred to by classical writers as Celts or Gauls. Lhuyd's usage has proved to be resilient and is now widely accepted.

The most thorough attempt to explore the extent of spoken Celtic is Patrick Sims-Williams's detailed research on ancient Celtic place names in Europe and Asia, published in 2006. It presents a set of data which, later replotted in a trend-surface map by Stephen Oppenheimer, shows that surviving Celtic place names are concentrated in Ireland, Britain, France, and Iberia, with less dense occurrences extending eastwards through the centre of Europe and around the Black Sea and cropping up again in Asia Minor. The eastern distribution neatly demonstrates the southern and eastern migrations of Celts recorded by classical writers at their height between 400 and 200 BC (Chapter 6), but it is the very strong western concentration that stands out. Taken at its face value the map seems to imply that the heart of Celtic-speaking Europe lay in the west, in the Atlantic zone. It should, however, be remembered that the data is achronic, reflecting the situation across many centuries, and it includes only those names which have survived the vicissitudes of later history. That said, there is no reason to suppose that it is not a fair representation of the region in which Celtic was most frequently spoken.

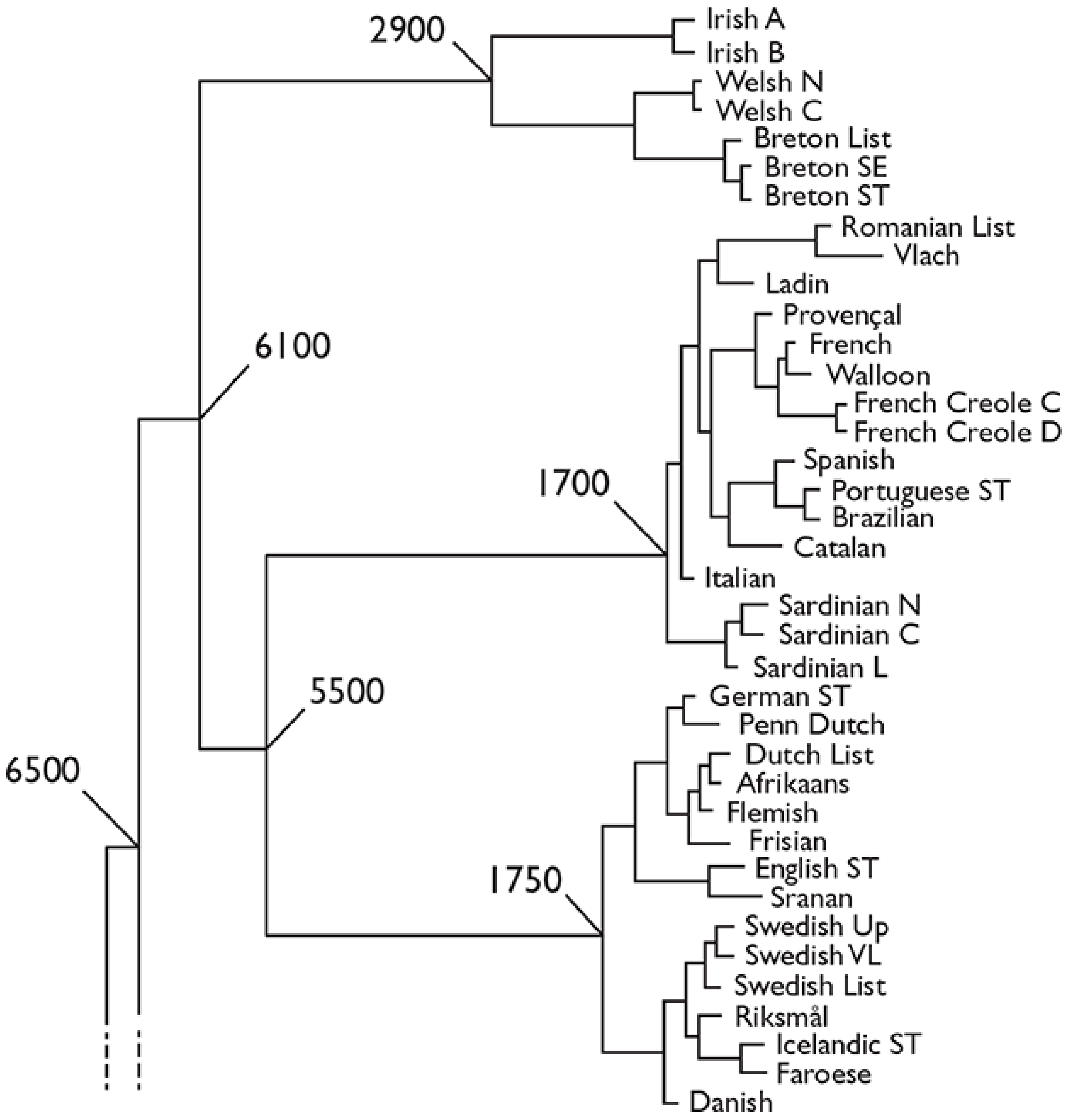
Since the original mapping was done, the detailed work of John Koch on the inscriptions found in the extreme south-western corner of Iberia has shown that Celtic was the indigenous language spoken in this region and has added further data to the map. More to the point, it has shown that Celtic was being spoken in the region in the seventh century BC and quite possibly at least as early as the eighth century. Inscriptions from the Lepontic region of northern Italy take the use of Celtic in that part of Europe to at least as early as the sixth century.

This evidence for the early use of the Celtic language clears away once and for all the old misconceptions that Celtic spread to western Europe in the La Tène period or for that matter in Late Hallstatt times (Ha C and D): it was already a vibrant language, at least in the Atlantic zone, in the Late Bronze Age. Since there are no extant Celtic texts earlier than the eighth century and no mention of Celts in the historical record before the sixth century, the question of Celtic origins must be explored using other data.

The Arrival of the Indo-European Languages

Celtic is an Indo-European language. It can only have developed, therefore, after the spread of Indo-European speakers to Europe. When and by which routes this spread took place is a hotly debated topic. There are currently two plausible models in play, the Kurgan hypothesis and the Anatolian hypothesis. Other suggestions proposing an introduction in the later Palaeolithic period have not found much favour.

The Kurgan model, first put forward at the end of the nineteenth century, has for long been the traditional view. It proposes that Indo-European was introduced by horse-riding nomads from the Pontic–Caspian steppe in the later Neolithic or Bronze Age, impacting first on the Carpathian region and then spreading from there to the rest of Europe. The Anatolian model, first presented in the late 1980s, argues that the Indo-European languages spread to Europe much earlier with the first farmers in a complex of movements emanating from Anatolia. The process began around 7000 BC and by 5500 BC the Neolithic way of life had reached the Atlantic coast. Both hypotheses have arguments in their favour and, as we will see later (pp. 64–5), they may not be mutually exclusive.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Welsh C
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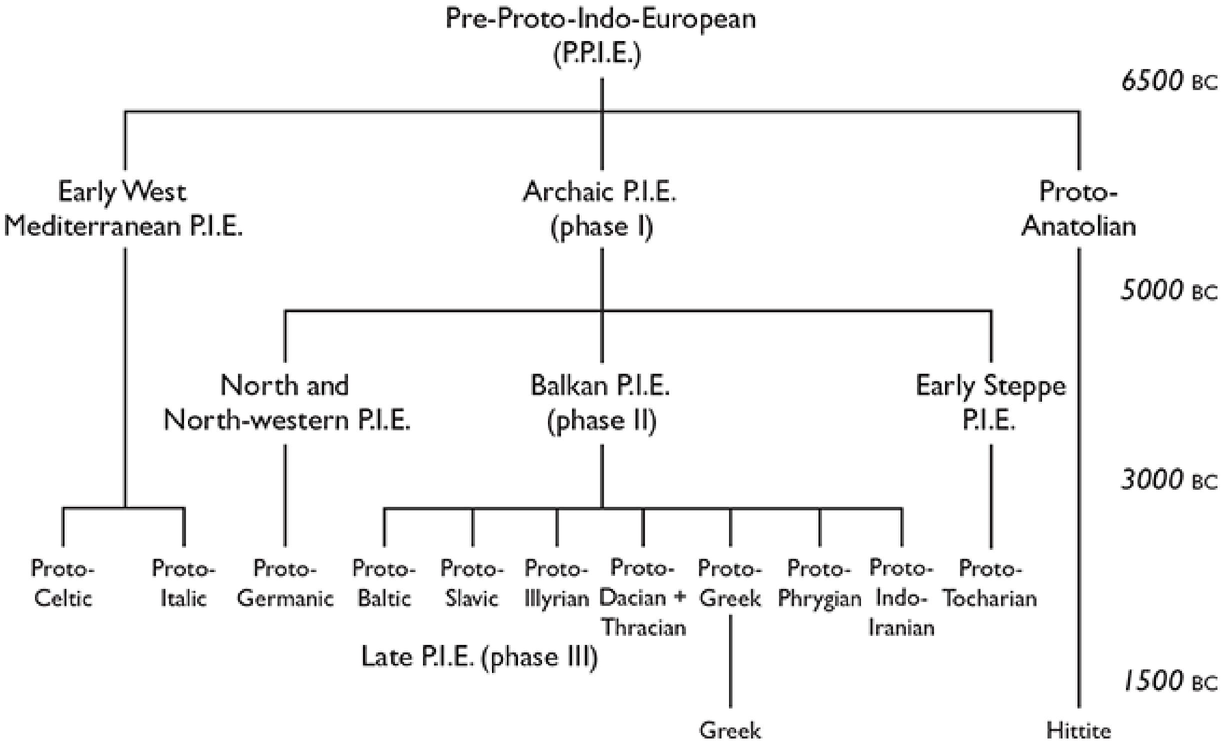
Romanian List
Vlach
Ladin
Provençal
French
Walloon
French Creole C
French Creole D
Spanish
Portuguese ST
Brazilian
Catalan
Italian
Sardinian N
Sardinian C
Sardinian L
German ST
Penn Dutch
Dutch List
Afrikaans
Flemish
Frisian
English ST
Sranan
Swedish Up
Swedish VL
Swedish List
Riksmål
Icelandic ST
Faroese
Danish

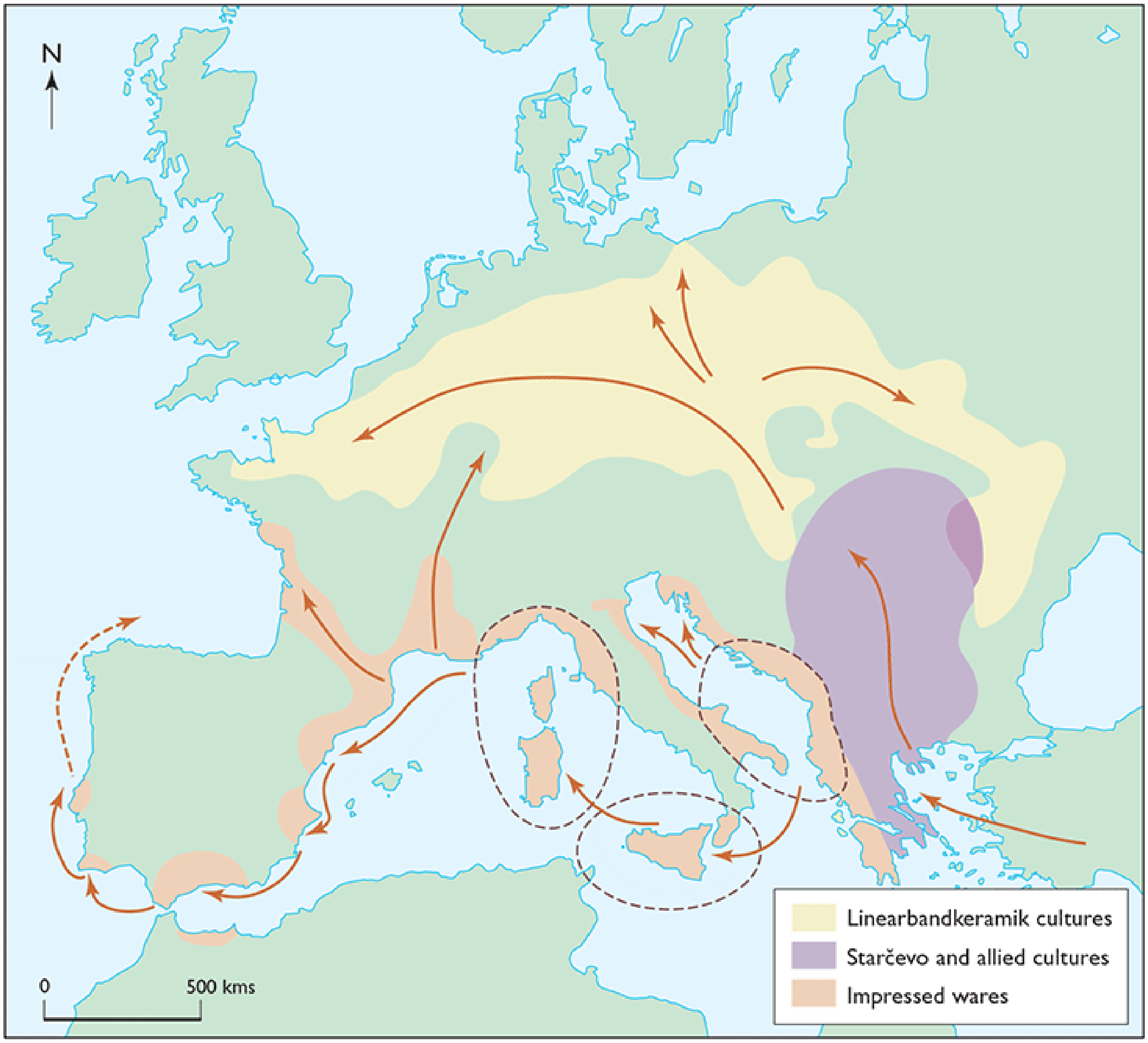
3.1 Family tree of the European branch of the Indo-European languages worked out using phylogenetic methods by Gray and Atkinson. The estimated dates are in years BP (before the present).


Pre-Proto-Indo-European
(P.P.I.E.)
6500 BC
Early West Mediterranean P.I.E.
Archaic P.I.E. (phase I)
Proto-Anatolian
5000 BC
North and North-western P.I.E.
Balkan P.I.E. (phase II)
Early Steppe P.I.E.
3000 BC
Proto-Celtic
Proto-Italic
Proto-Germanic
Proto-Baltic
Proto-Slavic
Proto-Illyrian
Proto-Dacian + Thracian
Proto-Greek
Proto-Phrygian
Proto-Indo-Iranian
Proto-Tocharian
Late P.I.E. (phase III)
1500 BC
Greek
Hittite

3.2 Hypothetical development and distribution of Proto-Indo-European proposed by Colin Renfrew.

The Anatolian model is favoured by several phylogenetic studies of the development of Indo-European. They support a date between 8000 and 6000 BC for the introduction of the language group into Europe, and allow that Indo-European may have been spoken on the Atlantic coast before 4000 BC. These dates fit well with what is known of the spread of the Neolithic way of life throughout Europe. The rapidly growing corpus of archaeological data shows that once Neolithic communities had established themselves in Greece around 7000 BC. The second route was by seaborne enclave-colonization through the Mediterranean, reaching the Atlantic coast of Portugal between 5500 and 5400 BC. There were also inland penetrations from the Mediterranean coast of France, one via the Rhône valley northwards, the other via the Aude–Garonne valleys to the Atlantic coast of France. The Middle European route was characterized by cultures using linear decorated pottery (Linearbandkeramik) while the communities of the Mediterranean route favoured Impressed (or Cardial) decorated pottery.

The successful spread of the Neolithic way of life across Europe involved the transfer of a complex knowledge base necessary to maintain stable systems of domestication and cultivation throughout a huge territory over a comparatively short space of time. It would not be at all surprising if the success of this process was largely due to the sharing of a common language. If the spread of food production was the vector by which Indo-European spread to Europe it would go some way to explaining why the Mediterranean languages, Greek, Italian, and Celtic, shared more in common than the northern European languages of the Germanic and Slavic groups since they were introduced by geographically separate systems of advance over a period of 1,500 years or more, allowing ample time for divergent development.


N
Linearbandkeramik cultures
Starčevo and allied cultures
Impressed wares
0
500 kms

3.3 The spread of farming communities through Europe c.7000–5300 BC. The two principal routes were via the Mediterranean by enclave-colonization (Impressed/Cardial Ware) and along the river routes of middle Europe (Linearbandkeramik). Farming reached the Atlantic coast by 5300 BC. One hypothesis is that the Indo-European languages spread to Europe with the early farmers.

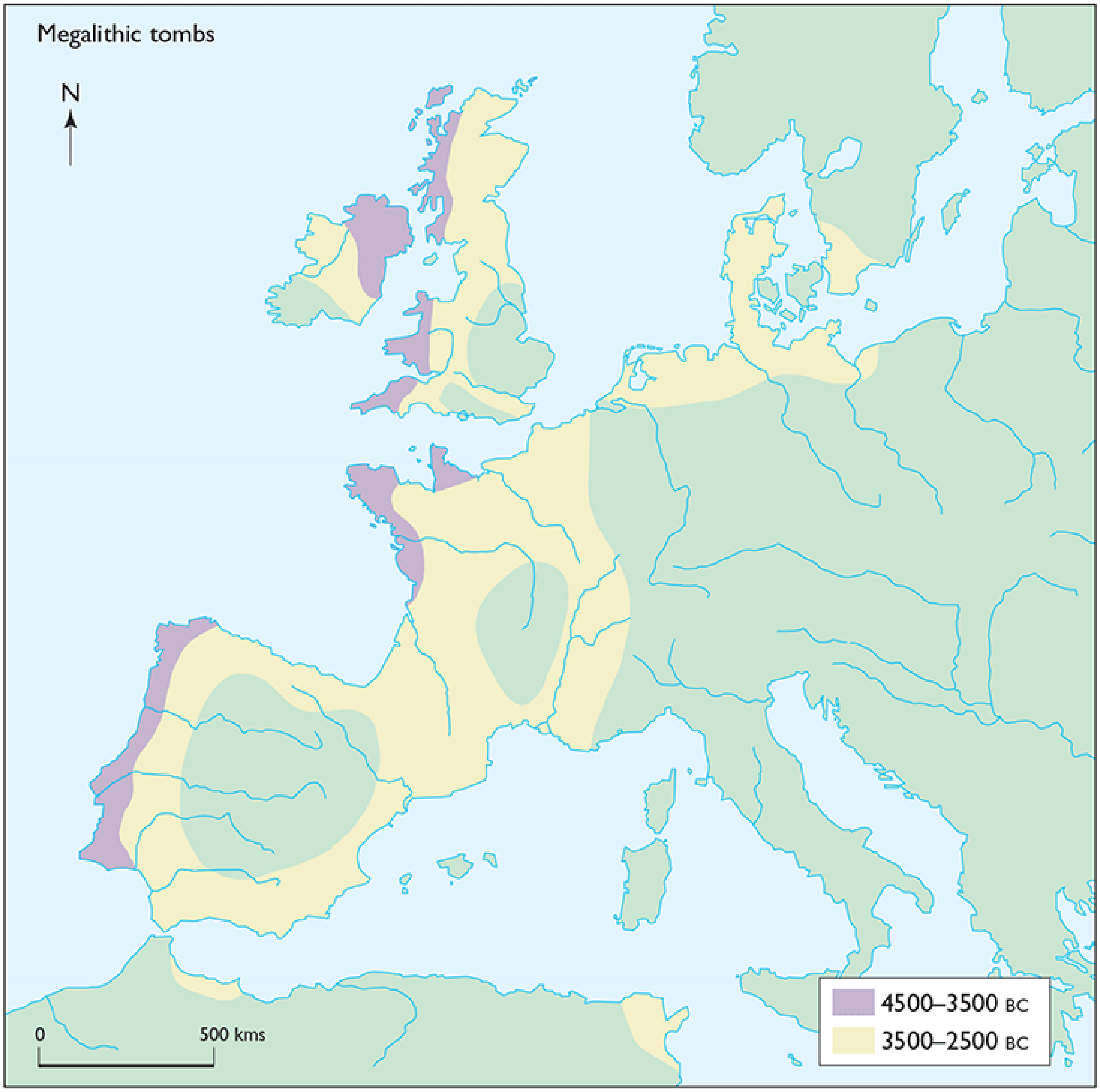
In the Anatolian model Indo-European speakers would have been established along much of the Atlantic coast of Iberia and the Atlantic and Channel coasts of France by 5000 BC.

The Atlantic Community

The coastal waters of Atlantic Europe provided an interconnecting network of seaways encouraging connectivity along the entire Atlantic coast from Morocco to the Shetland Isles. That said, it is unlikely that many long-haul journeys took place in prehistoric times, but short-haul sea journeys, between neighbouring coastal communities, are likely to have been frequent since the sea was a safer and quicker mode of communication than travel overland. Fishing trips, too, would have encouraged exploration. Over time the aggregate of these journeys was to create a maritime network through which commodities and ideas travelled and were shared. There is little direct evidence for when seafaring began in the Atlantic but the coastal zone may well have formed one of the principal routes along which hunter-gatherers moved northwards during the period of climatic improvement following the end of the Ice Age. The Cardial Ware farmers who first appeared on the Portuguese coast in the last centuries of the sixth millennium were able sailors and would have found themselves among indigenous hunter-gatherers who were well used to the sea.

There is ample archaeological evidence to show that the Atlantic coastal networks flourished in the period 5500–4000 BC. The Channel Islands were being colonized by farming communities around 5200 BC and seafarers were carrying domesticated animals (alive or as joints of meat) from Armorica to Ireland by the end of the fifth millennium. The intensity of connectivity along the Atlantic seaways is clearly reflected in the later development of collective tombs known as passage graves. The type seems to have its origin in Portugal about 4800 BC and spread quickly to Brittany, thence to the Irish Sea region of Britain and Ireland, reaching as far north as Orkney before the end of the fourth millennium. The architecture of these tombs with chambers reached by long passages, the burial rituals involved, the art styles sometimes employed, and the cosmology implied by the alignment of some of the tombs with solar activity at the time of the solstices suggest that these disparate communities from Iberia to the far north of Britain were sharing a complex belief system.

There is no need to suppose that the ideas were spread by ‘megalithic missionaries’ as was once colourfully suggested, but at the very least the beliefs, knowledge, and technical skills implied by the spread of passage graves suggest a developed and consistent connectivity along the seaways. Given the complexity of the ideas that had to be communicated, it is not unreasonable to suppose that people had developed a common language—a lingua franca—that enabled the disparate groups to establish social bonds and engage in reciprocal exchanges, including the exchange of abstract ideas. If we are correct in accepting the hypothesis that the early farmers brought the Indo-European language to the Atlantic coast, via both the Mediterranean and the middle European river systems, then the Atlantic lingua franca is likely to have been developed from Indo-European roots.



3.4 Megalithic tombs dating to between 4700 and 2000 BC are largely an Atlantic phenomenon. The earliest tombs, passage graves, dating to 4700–3000 BC, have a strongly maritime distribution suggesting that the beliefs, technology, and cosmology behind their construction was communicated along the Atlantic seaways.

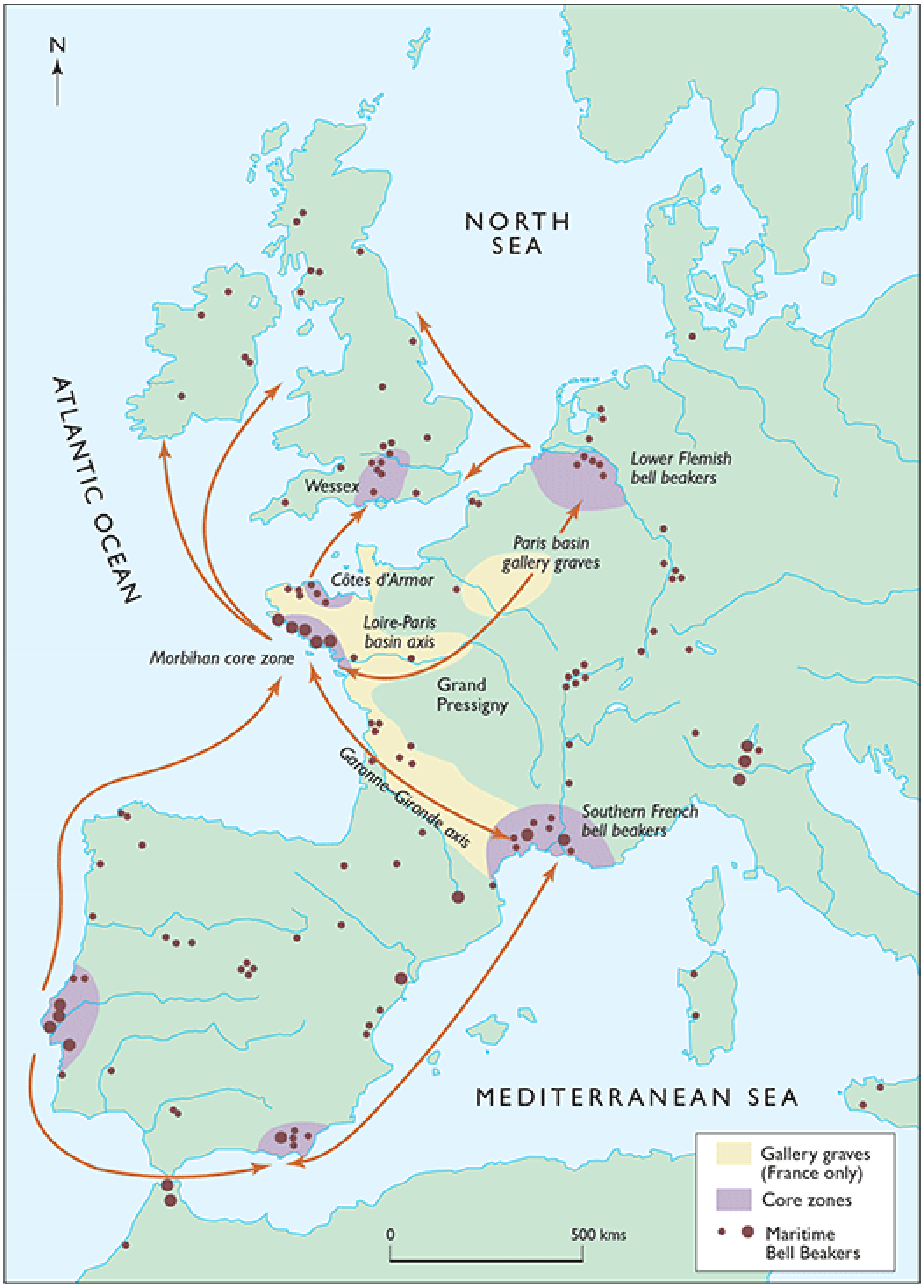
There would be nothing unusual about the emergence of a lingua franca that fostered communication along the Atlantic seaways. Similar languages have developed in other parts of the world to facilitate maritime connectivity. Swahili came into being along the east coast of Africa after the intensification of trade caused by Arab contact, and Malay developed to link the many isolated communities of the Malay archipelago. An early Atlantic lingua franca could have been the base from which Celtic developed. If this is so, then the Celtic language originated in the same maritime region in which it is known to have been widely spoken by the first millennium BC. There is a pleasing simplicity in this hypothesis.

The connectivity established in the Atlantic zone in the period 5500–2800 BC played an important role in the next stage of development, when there appears to have been an escalating mobility both of goods and of people. This phase, referred to as the Beaker phenomenon, is characterized by the appearance of a distinctive type of pottery beaker usually associated with a recurring set of grave goods including knives and archery equipment. In many areas of western Europe these grave sets are associated with individual burials but along the Atlantic zone Beaker burials are found in existing collective tombs. The earliest form of beaker, a highly distinctive form known as the Maritime Bell Beaker, first appears in the copper-using communities of the Tagus region of Portugal around 2800–2700 BC and the type quickly spread to many parts of western Europe. Where analysis of the pottery fabric has taken place it can usually be shown that local clays were used, a fact which shows that it was the concept of the vessel that was transmitted rather than the pots themselves. With that idea went many of the beliefs and values associated with the very specific set of artefacts often associated with the beakers.

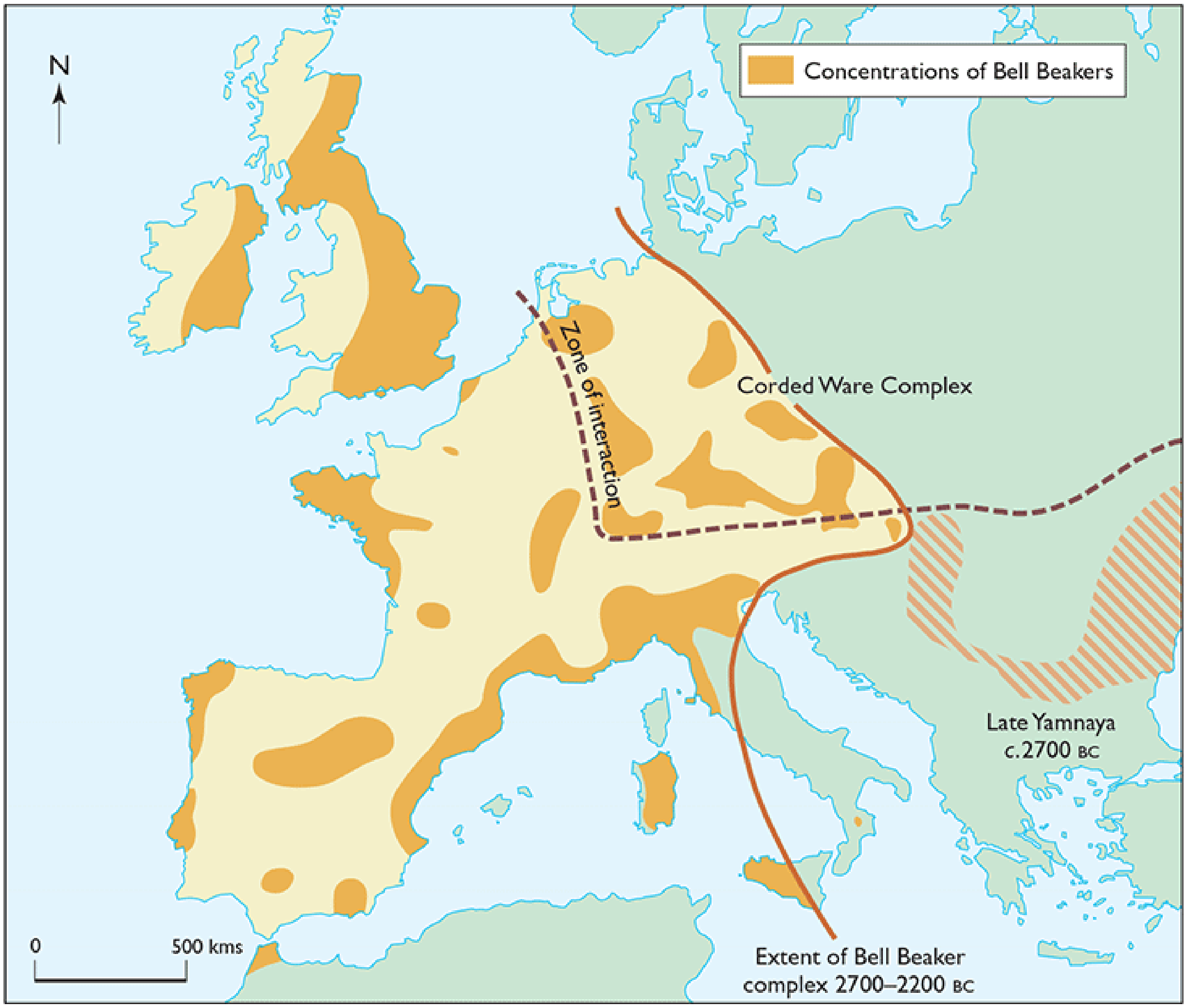
The rapid spread of the Beaker phenomenon across western Europe is remarkable. From the Atlantic homeland in Portugal the value system spread into the Mediterranean, especially to south-east Iberia and to the Golfe du Lion, and along the Atlantic to Brittany, Britain, and Ireland. It also penetrated inland along the European river systems. What drove the new mobility is difficult to say but one factor, possibly the prime cause, was the quest for metals. The Tagus communities were experienced in copper production, and their skills in working sulpharsenide ores were introduced into southern France, Brittany, and Ireland together with the Maritime Bell Beaker package. It is difficult to resist the conclusion that prospecting for metal was one of the driving forces behind the new mobility. Alongside the mining of copper, gold sources were also exploited, and it was not long before tin was being extracted and the earliest bronze (an alloy of copper and tin) produced. It is not entirely clear where exactly this technological breakthrough occurred in western

Europe but the earliest regular tin bronze was first made in the Atlantic region, sometime about 2100 BC in the metal-rich arc that included Brittany, south-western Britain, and southern Ireland. But it was not only metals that were being sought. Other luxury commodities such as jet and amber were now being exchanged on a greatly increased scale.

Alongside the mobility of materials we can begin to glimpse an enhanced mobility among people. The analysis of stable isotopes preserved in teeth offers a way of estimating how far an individual may have moved between early childhood and death. Studies in Germany and Britain show that a surprising percentage of the population had been mobile, though usually not over long distances. There are, however, exceptions. The coppersmith buried about 2000 BC at Amesbury, near Stonehenge, had probably spent his childhood in the western Alps. Clearly people were on the move, and even if much of the mobility was of limited extent, over the half a millennium of the Bell Beaker period (2700–2200 BC), the cumulative effect would have been considerable. By the end of this period Bell Beaker enclaves had reached as far east as Hungary. But the distribution of the phenomenon is uneven and although dense Bell Beaker clusters occur across western Europe, generally focused on the major river valleys, indigenous cultures continued to exist over large areas. The evidence would be consistent with the hypothesis that there were movements of people eastwards over Europe carrying with them belief systems and values emanating ultimately from the Atlantic maritime zone. The picture is still ill-focused and highly complex but work at present under way on the ancient DNA of Beaker populations will help to clarify the intricacies of the situation.


N
NORTH SEA
ATLANTIC OCEAN
Lower Flemish bell beakers
Wessex
Paris basin gallery graves
Côtes d'Armor
Loire-Paris basin axis
Morbihan core zone
Grand Pressigny
Garonne-Gironde axis
Southern French bell beakers
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
0
500 kms
Gallery graves (France only)
Core zones
Maritime Bell Beakers

3.5 The distribution of highly distinctive Maritime Bell Beakers in western Europe in the period 2700–2000 BC suggests a connectivity born of an enhanced degree of mobility. Maritime Bell Beakers and the belief system associated with them originated in the Tagus region and spread quickly to coastal areas, most notably the Morbihan, from where further spreads occurred.


N
Concentrations of Bell Beakers
Zone of interaction
Corded Ware Complex
Late Yamnaya
c.2700 BC
0
500 kms
Extent of Bell Beaker
complex 2700–2200 BC

3.6 Between 2700 and 2200 BC the Bell Beaker phenomenon spread from the west deep into middle Europe, where it overlapped with the Corded Ware zone—a cultural complex occupying much of the North European Plain which incorporated influences from the Pontic steppe. It was in the Rhine valley region that the two cultures interacted with each other and from there subsequent movements brought a modified Beaker culture to other parts of the west.

Thus, it would seem that following a period during which networks of connectivity were established along the entire Atlantic zone (5500–2800 BC), there was a period of intensifying mobility (2800–2100 BC), driven, at least in part, by the quest for metals and other luxury commodities, which saw the spread of the Bell Beaker cultural values across western Europe. If the beginnings of Celtic as a lingua franca lay in the earlier period, then the eastward spread of Bell Beaker culture could be the vector by which the Celtic language spread across much of western Europe. The fact that the extent of the Bell Beaker phenomenon in the late third millennium BC is largely coincident with the known extent of Celtic place names by the late first millennium BC may be no coincidence. That said, the picture is likely to be more complex, as we will see.

People from the Steppe

As already discussed earlier in this chapter, the Kurgan model for the spread of Indo-European languages into Europe argues that the language was introduced by nomadic peoples moving westwards from the Pontic–Caspian steppe. One such early moment can be recognized archaeologically and is classified as the Late Yamnaya culture. The incomers, moving west out of their steppe homeland around 2800 BC, settled along the western shores of the Black Sea, along the Lower Danube valley, and across the expanse of the Great Hungarian Plain, attracted by the vast areas of lush open grassland. The archaeological evidence for the incursion finds strong support from recent ancient DNA studies which have identified the steppe gene spreading across eastern and north-eastern Europe at this time. The influx of new people brought with it well-trained riding horses and the technology of vehicle building and was a formative influence on the indigenous Single Grave/Corded Ware culture of the North European Plain.

With the Bell Beaker communities expanding rapidly across western Europe from the Atlantic zone eastwards and the steppe pastoralists moving westwards into central and northern Europe, the middle centuries of the third millennium, 2800–2200 BC, were a time of greatly increased mobility. The true complexity of the situation has still to be worked out, but certain things are already clear. Perhaps most important for the present discussion is the emergence of a zone of interaction between the Bell Beaker communities and the Single Grave/Corded Ware culture, focused in particular in the Rhine corridor. It was here that elements from the two cultural traditions merged.

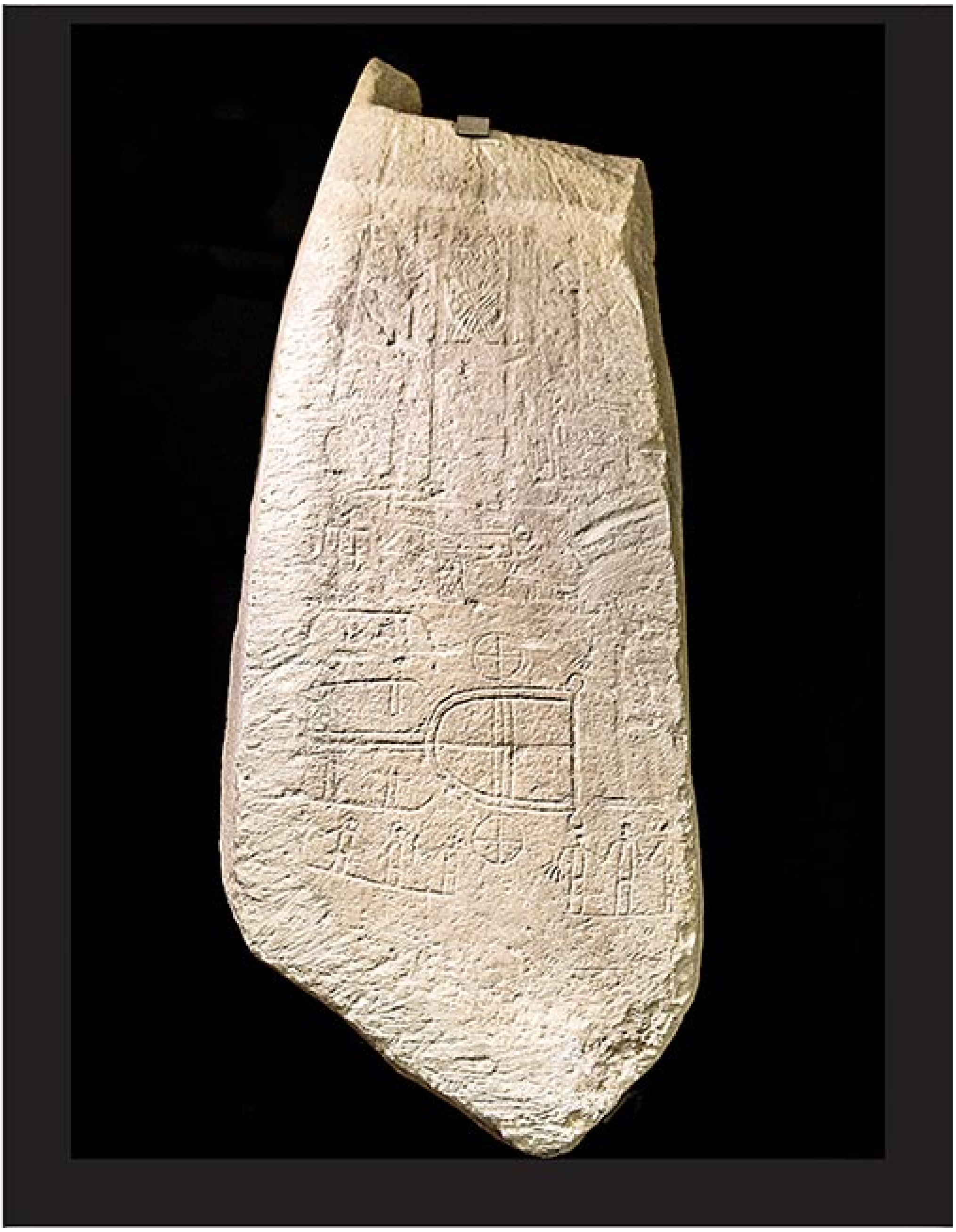
Something of the mobility of the time is demonstrated by the network of connectivity which was established across northern France, linking southern Brittany via the Loire and across the GÃ¢tinais to the Seine valley, and from there to the Lower Rhine. The river system played an important part and the networks were already active in the preceding millennium as the distribution of stone axes clearly demonstrates. It was probably along this route that Maritime Bell Beakers reached the Lower Rhine valley about 2700–2500 BC and the route facilitated the distribution of the much-sought-after honey-coloured Grand Pressigny flint mined in the vicinity of Poitiers. Amber from the coast of Jutland was exchanged in the opposite direction. Already, by 3000 BC, the Lower Rhine region had adopted a single burial rite in which the inhumations were accompanied by a beaker decorated with cord impressions, and quite often with a perforated stone battle-axe (the rite characteristic of the Single Grave/Corded Ware culture of the North European Plain). The arrival of the Maritime Bell Beaker ensemble from the west initiated a period of borrowing and experimentation and it was during this time that the single burial rite and the shaft-hole axes spread westwards across much of France to the Atlantic coast and into Britain. All this is clearly displayed in the archaeological record.

Those who favour the Kurgan hypothesis argue that it was probably in the phase of intense mobility, in the middle centuries of the third millennium, that the Indo-European language was first introduced into Europe and that it was probably somewhere in west central Europe that the Celtic language gradually emerged. They support their arguments by saying that certain words in Celtic, such as those associated with horses and wheeled vehicles, cannot have arrived before this time since horses and carts are not known in the early Neolithic of the Cardial Ware or Linearbandkeramik cultures. The Kurgan hypothesis, however, can only explain the extensive use of the Celtic language in Iberia by positing a Bronze Age introduction, for which there is no convincing archaeological evidence. It also is at odds with phylogenetic studies which suggest the emergence of Celtic by 4000 BC. The Kurgan and Anatolian hypotheses each have their enthusiastic supporters. Their arguments, both archaeological and linguistic, are as complex as they are ingenious, but an impartial observer might reasonably feel that neither side has furnished conclusive proof of their case.

Is there a Compromise?

A possible compromise worth considering is that both hypotheses may in part be true, with a first wave of Indo-European speakers arriving with the first farmers from Anatolia and spreading through the Mediterranean and middle Europe and a second wave reaching Europe from the steppe several millennia later. In such a scenario it could be argued that the Atlantic lingua franca spreading into western Europe in the first half of the third millennium was refreshed and extended during the period of intense mobility in the middle centuries of that millennium and that it was in Atlantic Europe, bound by active systems linking the entire maritime interface, that the Celtic language crystallized out, its continuing function as a lingua franca ensuring that it did not, at this stage, fragment into incomprehensible dialects. This compromise takes with it the assumption of linguistic links between Anatolia and the Pontic–Caspian steppe region, requiring that they both spoke Indo-European. That such a link may, indeed, have occurred is suggested by recent ancient DNA results which demonstrate a movement of population from Anatolia to the steppe in the late fourth millennium. While by no means proving that Indo-European reached the steppe at this time, it offers a mechanism by which it could have happened.

These are deeply fascinating issues which get to the very heart of our perception of prehistory. They require archaeologists, linguists, and geneticists to work closely together to try to understand the strengths and limitations of each other’s disciplines, data, and interpretations and especially to acknowledge the limitations. Perhaps it is too optimistic to expect the archaeological and linguistic data to be capable of being brought together into a coherent story. But the attempt is worthwhile. It may, however, be that this will require historical linguists to abandon the simplistic tree approach to the ordering of the Indo-European languages and to give more attention to the impact of processes of convergence and divergence, especially in regions like the Atlantic maritime zone where there is ample archaeological evidence of connectivity over a very long period of time. Nor can the possibility of multiple incursions of Indo-European speakers into Europe easily be accommodated in the conventional tree model. Where we can expect real advances to be made is when ancient DNA data becomes available in sufficient quantity to be brought into juxtaposition with the archaeological evidence so as to create mutually supporting and quantifiable models of human mobility. Only then will we be able to address the question of the origin of Celtic with a greater degree of assurance.



4

The Atlantic System

1300–200 BC

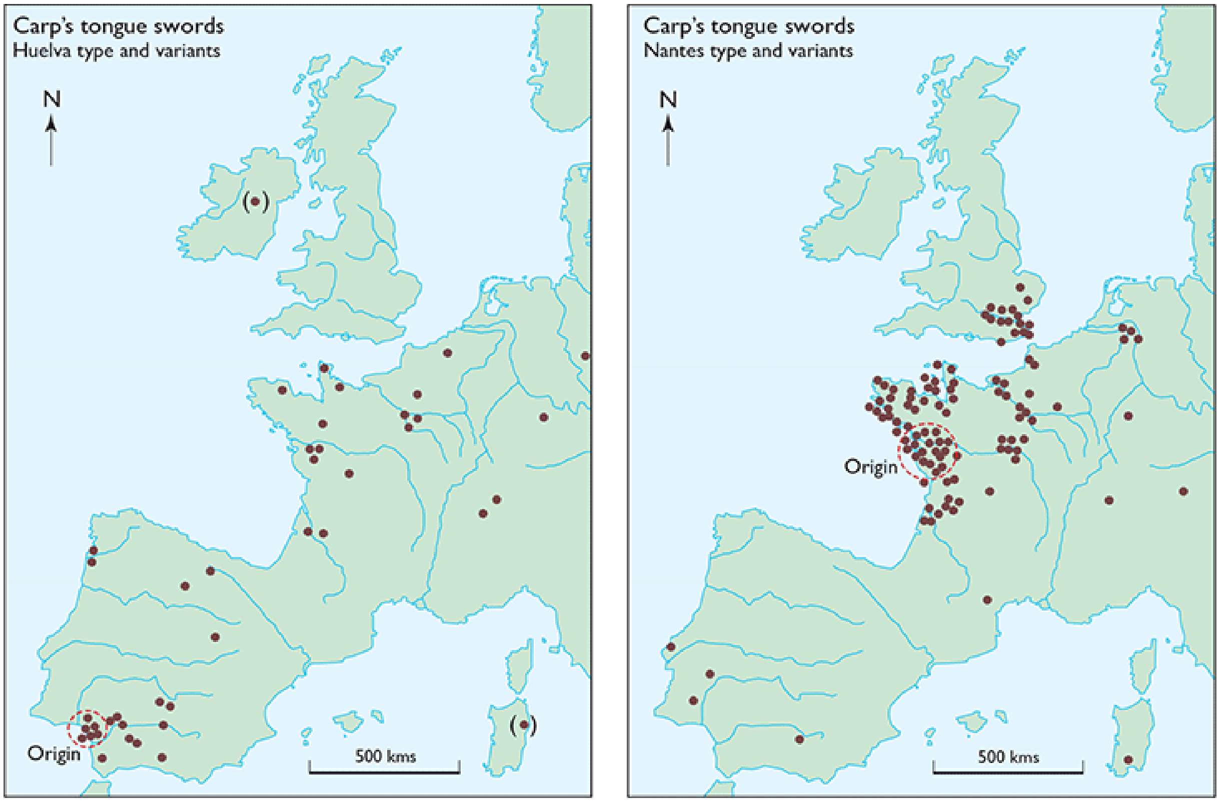
THE Atlantic seaways continued to develop throughout the Bronze Age, and by the Late Bronze Age (1300–800BC) the maritime interactions had reached a peak of intensity. The prime motivation is likely to have been the exchange of commodities, particularly metals, but the archaeological evidence leaves little doubt that complex social relationships played a large part in the mobility. By the end of the period similar warrior weapon sets were in use along the entire Atlantic façade and feasting played a vital role in maintaining social engagement. The Celtic language would now have been in regular use throughout the maritime zone to facilitate the intricate networks of connectivity.

The broad similarities which bound the different communities of the Atlantic zone together must be seen against regional variations in culture defined by different styles of tools and weapons with limited distributions. These reflect discrete socio-economic systems. Within each there will have been social territories governed by chieftains, difficult now to recognize through the archaeological evidence. The river systems provided routes inland and it was among the valleys that settlements tended to concentrate, but it was the sea, as always, that offered the facility for long-distance communication and exchange linking the regions to create a single cultural continuum.

The movement of metal products in cycles of gift exchange serves to demonstrate the complex patterns of contact in operation. The finely cast bronze spearheads with loops towards the base of the blade found, together with quantities of other weapons, in the harbour of Huelva in south-western Spain were made in Ireland and must have travelled more than 1,800 kilometres before being deposited. Whether they were transported in a single voyage or passed from one community to the next, being valued for their quality and curiosity, is impossible to say. The same long-distance link is also reflected in the distribution of shields, or rather the idea of the ideal shield. The classic type, made from leather or bronze (or a combination of the two), was circular with concentric ribs interrupted in one place with a V-notch. Shields of this kind are depicted on carved stelae found in south-western Iberia, like the famous example from Solance de Cabanas, which shows a circular shield that details its central handgrip and what appears to be rivet heads between the ribs. An almost identical shield, an actual example made of leather, was found in a bog at Clonbrin, Co. Longford, in Ireland. Two wooden moulds for making shields of this kind were also found in Irish bogs, suggesting that the type was by no means uncommon. What is notable about the Clonbrin shield is that it is provided with skeuomorphic rivet heads of the kind that would have occurred in examples made of bronze. Actual bronze shields are known from various locations in western Europe. Clearly the type was favoured by the warrior elite along the Atlantic façade.

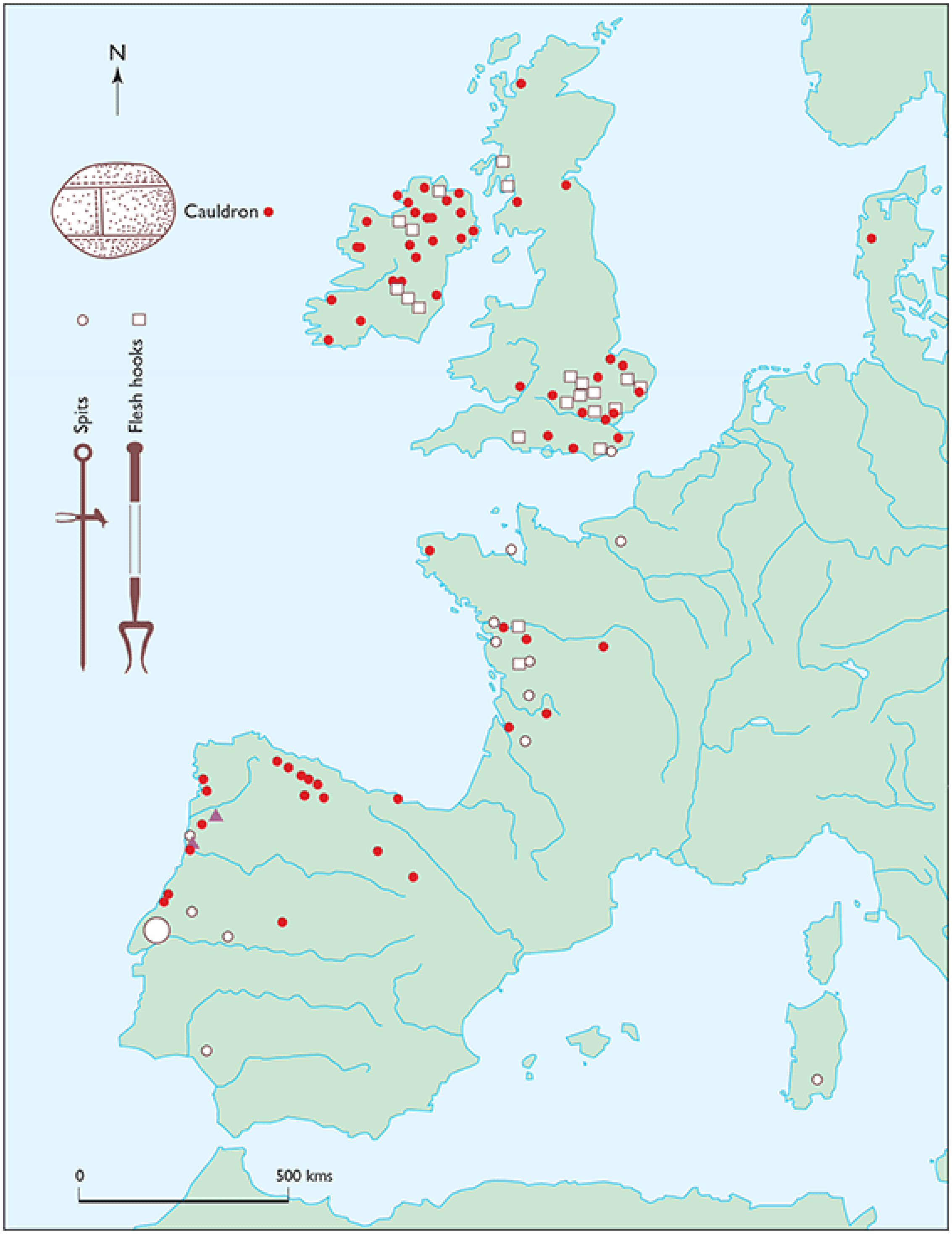
Warriors were also provided with bronze swords, of which a number of types are known. One of the commonest is the carp’s tongue sword, so named by a British antiquary who had evidently been an enthusiastic fisherman. It had a heavy blade with a long narrow pointed end combining the characteristics of an Atlantic slashing sword and a Mediterranean rapier. The earliest version, known as the Huelva variety, was made in the tenth century BC in south-western Iberia, where finds are concentrated. Some examples were exchanged northwards along the seaways to western and north-western France, at least one reaching as far as Ireland. Somewhere in north-western France local swordsmiths developed a version of their own, named the Nantes variety, in the late tenth or early ninth century. It became popular in the region and in south-eastern Britain: some even reached southern Iberia. The finds from Britain are usually fragmentary and are found in scrap hoards, suggesting that they were imported as metal and not for use, the reason probably being that the Britons favoured locally made slashing swords. The example of the carp’s tongue sword is informative in showing how ideas could spread throughout the Atlantic zone, being taken up by local craftsmen, while local preferences for traditional types could prevail.

The weapon sets found along the Atlantic zone, and represented on the south-western Iberian stelae, reflect the equipment of the warrior elite. A different aspect of society is manifest in feasting gear recovered from the same region. The focus of the feast would have been the communal cauldron made of bronze sheets riveted together, with the rim straightened to take two large rings to which were attached chains or ropes so that the cauldron could be suspended over the fire from the roof timbers. To remove the joints of meat from the stew bronze flesh hooks were used. Another artefact of the feasting tradition was the articulated roasting spit for skewering the carcass and turning it over the fire. These roasting spits seem to have been a Mediterranean invention that was adopted by the Atlantic communities. The distribution of the accoutrements of feasting, concentrating in western Iberia, western France, southern Britain, and Ireland, span the Atlantic zone and reflect yet another aspect of its social cohesion going back to at least the twelfth century BC. The significance of the feast in later Celtic society is a matter to which we will return (pp. 231–4).


Carp's tongue swords
Huelva type and variants
N
(•)
(•)
Origin
500 kms
Carp's tongue swords
Nantes type and variants
N
Origin
500 kms

4.1 The earliest carp's tongue sword type (the Huelva variant) developed in south-western Iberia in the early tenth century and spread along the Atlantic seaways. A later type developed in the Lower Loire valley (the Nantes variant) in the period 950–875 BC and became widespread in north-western France and southern Britain.

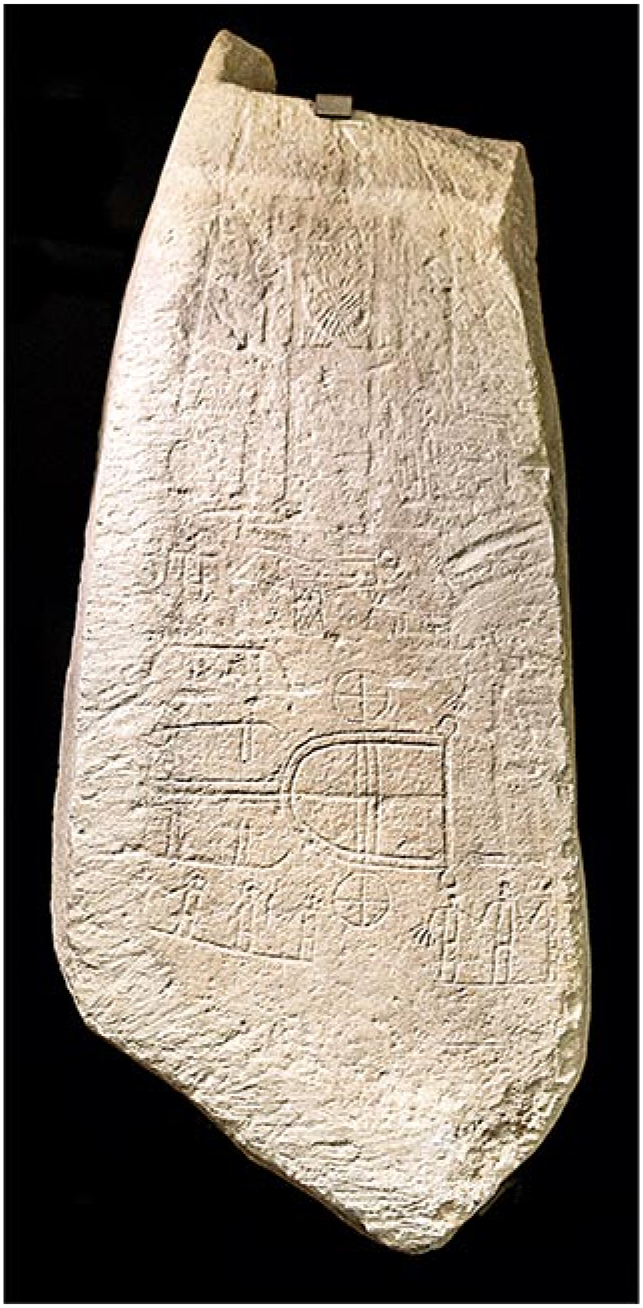
Similarities in social structure are also hinted at by the appearance of hilltop fortifications, sometimes enclosing large areas, along the Atlantic seaways. Enclosures of this kind, beginning between 1300 and 1000BC, are found in western Iberia, north-western France, Britain, and southern Ireland. They must represent an expression of coercive power at work within society but it is difficult to be sure whether it was for the benefit of the community or the elite. In western Iberia, however, the discovery of high-value artefacts at some of these sites points to elite residences.


N
Cauldron ●
Spits ○
Flesh hooks □
0
500 kms

4.2 The distribution of Late Bronze Age feasting gear throughout the Atlantic zone indicates the extent of a particular kind of social behaviour in which gatherings for feasting formed a focus for communal interactions.

Finally, another behaviour pattern which pervades the Atlantic zone is a common attitude to the deities, reflected in ritual depositions, and in particular the use of watery places as favoured locations for placing votive deposits. Rivers, bogs, and springs were all used and it may be that some of the collections of metalwork found in the sea are not the result of shipwreck but are votive offerings. This, at least, seems to be the best explanation for the large deposit recovered from the harbour of Huelva in south-western Iberia. Ritual deposits, usually referred to as hoards, were also made on land. The compulsion which some communities felt to make depositions of this kind is dramatically displayed in Brittany and Lower Normandy in the seventh and sixth centuries. Here special types of straight-sided axes with an unusually high lead content were buried in exceptionally large numbers. More than 300 hoards have been found containing some 40,000 axes. If the assumption is made that only a third of those buried have so far been found, the metal consumed in deposition would have amounted to 8 tonnes of copper, 6 tonnes of lead, and 2 tonnes of tin. The human effort required to extract metal in this quantity would have been enormous. The imperative to make the deposits at such a cost must have been overwhelming. One possibility is that society was experiencing some kind of crisis and was responding to the gods accordingly.

What all these deposits on land, in watery places, and at sea represent is a strong belief in the power of the chthonic deities. Already well established in the Atlantic zone in the second half of the second millennium, the deposition of valued goods continued to feature prominently in the belief systems of the historical Celts.



4.3 Carved stela, possibly of Late Bronze Age date, from Ategua, Andalucía, Spain. The central part of the scene illustrates a two-wheeled vehicle pulled by paired quadrupeds with another standing by. At the bottom are human figures, one group of whom seems to be dancing. The scene is probably part of a funerary ritual. Museo Arqueológico y Etnológico de Córdoba.

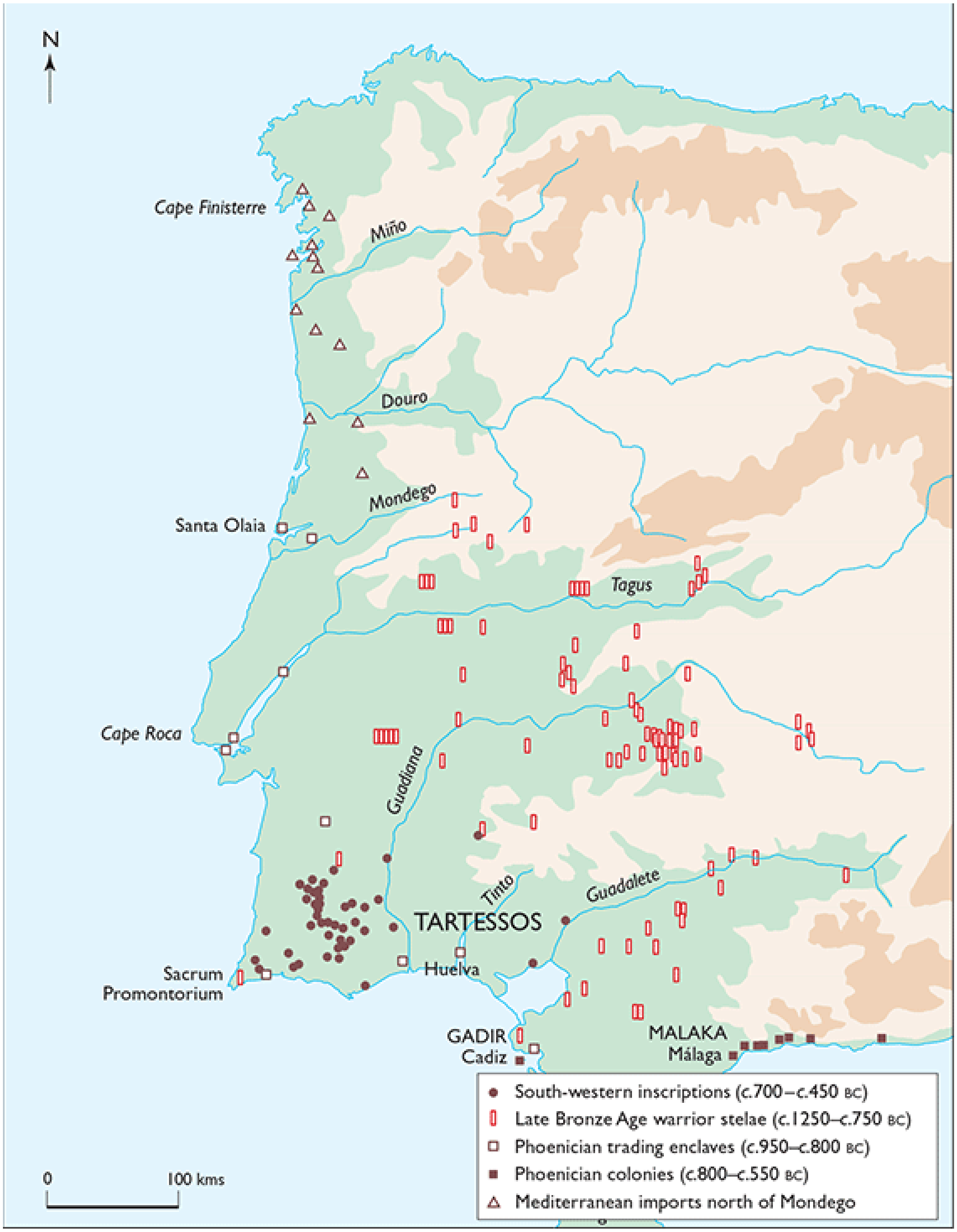
People from the East: Enter the Phoenicians

By the twelfth century BC the Mycenaeans had already developed trading links with communities in the central Mediterranean, and Mycenaean traders and craftsmen were settled on Sardinia at this time. Since Sardinia also had maritime connections with Iberia, knowledge of the metal-rich west will have reached the Mycenaean world. There is little direct evidence to show that Mycenaeans had begun to explore the west for themselves. Sherds of late Mycenaean pottery have been found in Andalucía, while at Santa Marina de Oro on the west coast of Galicia an engraving of a ship has been discovered which some commentators consider to represent a Mycenaean vessel. These scraps are insufficient to prove direct Mycenaean involvement with the far west but the east Mediterranean polities were at least aware of the metal resources of Iberia. It was left to the Phoenicians to begin to open up the market.

There is now ample and growing evidence for the establishment of Phoenician trading enclaves along the Atlantic coast of Iberia, the earliest so far known dating to the tenth century BC. The most convincing evidence comes from excavations deep beneath the modern city of Huelva on the estuary of the Odiel and Tinto rivers, where a thriving indigenous community was already established, quite possibly the famous Tartessos recorded in contemporary accounts. From this early beginning further Atlantic trading enclaves were set up, north as far as the river Mondego and south along the African coast, with an outpost on the island of Mogador opposite Essaouira. In the ninth century the trading port of Gadir (Cadiz) was established on offshore islands in the estuary of the Guadalete to serve as the organizational centre for the Atlantic trading ventures. A little later a series of colonial enclaves were set up at close intervals along the Mediterranean coast of Andalucía. While the Atlantic enclaves depended entirely on trade, these Andalucían colonies relied on the agrarian productivity of the fertile regions in which they were founded.

A prime attraction to the traders was the range of metals available in the Rio Tinto region upriver from Huelva/Tartessos, most notably silver, which was extracted and exported in vast quantities. The more distant enclaves set up on the Iberian Atlantic coast were able to tap into other metals—copper, gold, and tin—found in the rich pyrite zone of western Iberia, the tin coming from Galicia in the extreme north-west. Traders along the African coast had access to ivory, ostrich eggshell, the much-sought-after red dye extracted from the murex shell, and gold from the rich goldfields of West Africa.

The effects of the Phoenician enterprise on the indigenous Late Bronze Age population of Iberia were many. The presence of traders avid for silver encouraged production on a greatly increased scale and provided the local elites with an abundant source of exotic luxury goods. It also attracted craftsmen from the eastern Mediterranean to satisfy local demand for products incorporating eastern styles. The orientalizing of Tartessian society is recognizable in the grave goods found in elite burials such as the elaborate wheeled vehicle from a tomb in the La Joya cemetery at Huelva and the intricate gold jewellery from Aliseda in the Upper Tagus valley. Another effect is that the Phoenicians introduced their own script into an area where hitherto there had been no formal writing. In the eighth century the indigenous population living in the extreme south-west of the peninsula begun to use the new script for funerary inscriptions composed in the local Celtic language. This is the earliest evidence we have that Celtic was now spoken.


N
Cape Finisterre
Miño
Douro
Mondego
Santa Olaia
Tagus
Cape Roca
Guadiana
Tinto
Guadalete
TARTESSOS
Huelva
Sacrum
Promontorium
GADIR
Cadiz
MALAKA
Málaga
● South-western inscriptions (c.700–c.450 BC)
▯ Late Bronze Age warrior stelae (c.1250–c.750 BC)
□ Phoenician trading enclaves (c.950–c.800 BC)
■ Phoenician colonies (c.800–c.550 BC)
△ Mediterranean imports north of Mondego
0
100 kms

4.4 Phoenician trading enclaves were being established along the Atlantic coast of Iberia in the tenth and ninth centuries BC at a time when the indigenous communities were erecting stelae to commemorate warriors. Those in the extreme south-west were inscribed using Phoenician script to record the Celtic language.

On a more profound level the Phoenician interest in the metal-producing regions of Iberia had a significant effect on the Atlantic Late Bronze Age system in that it drew the Atlantic-facing Iberian communities closely into the Mediterranean sphere, thus loosening the old long-distance links between Iberia and France, Britain, and Ireland. So it was that from the ninth century the Atlantic Late Bronze Age network ceased to function as a single system.

Iberia: The Atlantic and Mediterranean Interfaces

The Iberian peninsula is best characterized as a block of land, higher in the east and sloping down to the west. This gives it its distinctive qualities. The west is dominated by a series of great rivers flowing to the Atlantic, the Mino (Minho), Douro, Mondego, Tagus, Guadiana, and Guadalquivir. These valleys provide easy access from the sea deep into the peninsula. The higher southern and eastern edges, on the other hand, create a more inaccessible coast with few significant rivers, apart from the Segura and the Ebro, flowing to the Mediterranean. Iberia is also effectively isolated from the rest of Europe by the Pyrenees and by their westward extension, the mountain ranges of Cantabria.

The position of the peninsula, between the Atlantic and the Mediterranean, as well as its varied relief, has a direct effect on climate, the north and the west being significantly wetter and cooler than the south and east. This, in turn, conditioned the vegetation. The south and east share a typical Mediterranean ecology supporting olives and grapes, while the north and west is a temperate zone with much deciduous woodland. Iberia, then, sits astride two ecological systems, the Atlantic system of the west and the Mediterranean system of the south and east. Between, in the centre of the peninsula, lies the Meseta, a hot, dry upland area, while to the north-east the river Ebro, flowing to the Mediterranean, creates a more congenial and accessible environment. Each of these four broad zones has its own distinctive cultural history.

Until about 900 BC the Atlantic zone, as we have seen, was part of a broader Atlantic cultural system but the spread of Phoenician commercial interests northwards along the coast drew the region more closely into the Mediterranean sphere. The distribution of Phoenician and later

Carthaginian material, mainly pottery and trinkets, shows that traders extended their interests northwards from their trading base at Santa Olaia in the Mondego estuary to the Rías Baixas of western Galicia but not beyond. It was on the islands and peninsulas of the ria coastline that they were able to deal with the natives for tin and perhaps some gold. Once these trading networks were established they continued little changed for several hundred years and there is no evidence to suggest that the merchants were induced to journey beyond Cape Finisterre.

The Phoenicians did not have it all to themselves. In about 630 BC a Greek shipowner, Kolaios of Samos, reached Tartessos (probably Huelva), thereby opening up the Tartessian market for Greek entrepreneurs, and eighty years later Herodotus records that Phokaian Greeks were being warmly received by the Tartessian king. At this time or a little later another Greek adventurer, Midakritos, was venturing along the Atlantic coast in search of tin, which he would have been able to acquire in coastal Galicia. It may have been Midakritos or one of his contemporaries who wrote down sailing directions in a periplus setting out details of the sea voyage between the home port of Massalia (Marseilles) and a final destination on the Atlantic coast. The text, known as the Massiliot Periplus, was incorporated in a much later poem, *Ora Maritima*, composed by Avienus in the fourth century BC. After this date the growing antagonism between the Carthaginians and the Greeks probably led to the closure of the Strait of Gibraltar to Greek shipping.

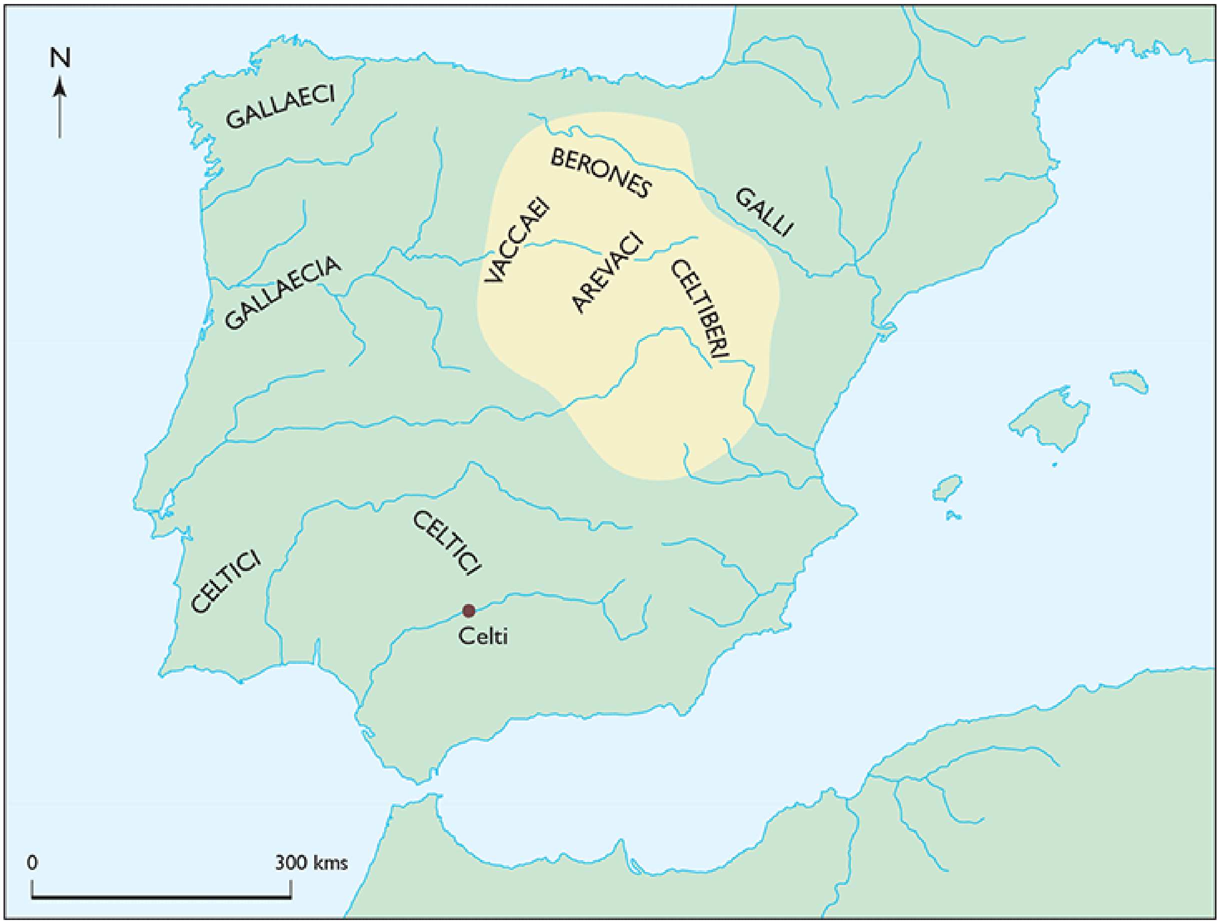
The Mediterranean coast of southern and eastern Iberia constituted an entirely different system. Culturally this was the land of the Iberians made up of a number of different polities sharing a broadly similar culture stretching from Andalucía to the Ebro valley. From the eighth to the third century this long interface was open to the orientalizing and classicizing effects of intensive trade with the Phoenicians and the Greeks. Large nucleated settlements, many of them already occupied in the Late Bronze Age, adopted the characteristics of Mediterranean cities. A distinctive art style emerged, represented in vase painting, sculpture, and metalwork, and the society developed a degree of complexity which, by the fourth century, can reasonably be called a state system. That a distinct script emerged to express the Iberian language was no doubt a consequence of increasing socio-economic complicity. It was at this time that military forces, armed with round shields and *falcatas* (short swords with a single curved cutting edge), took on the appearance of hoplite armies and were in demand as mercenaries throughout the Mediterranean. In short, the Iberians of southern and eastern Iberia can best be regarded as a Mediterranean people sharing increasingly in the development of that region. That they spoke a non-Indo-European language distinguishes them from the Celtic speakers in the west of the peninsula.

In the north-east of Iberia, particularly in the Ebro valley and the coastal regions of Catalonia, there developed a Late Bronze Age culture which exhibited close parallels with Urnfield developments in temperate Europe. The communities on both sides of the Pyrenees were sufficiently similar to suggest that contacts were maintained, possibly involving limited movements of people. At the very least the Iberian communities readily absorbed the beliefs and material culture of their northern neighbours, interpreting them in a local manner. The extension of Greek influence along the coast of northern Catalonia, following the establishment of the colony of Emporion (Ampurias) in the sixth century, helped to integrate the coastal zone into the Ligurian sphere which spread around the Golfe du Lion.

The Celtiberians

In the central regions of the peninsula, embracing the upper reaches of the rivers Ebro, Douro, and Tagus, were a number of tribes together known from at least the beginning of the second century BC by classical writers as Celtiberi or Celtiberes. According to Diodorus, no doubt quoting Poseidonius, ‘Celtiberes are a fusion of two people and the combination of Celts and Iberes only took place after long and bloody wars’ (*Hist*. 5. 33). This may be nothing more than a creative rationalization but it was widely believed. Indeed Martial, who was born in Bibilis in Celtiberian territory in AD 40, several times refers to ‘we who are descended from Celts and Iberians’. Diodorus describes the Celtiberi as very warlike, but they were noted for their hospitality since they regarded strangers as being under divine protection. He goes on to say that ‘some have shields of lightly constructed Celtic type; others a round shield of the kind more familiar in the Greek world. The iron of their two-edged swords, shorter than the Celtic great sword, is capable of cutting anything’ (*Hist*. 5. 33).

Other authors contribute to the generalized Graeco-Roman view of the Celtiberian, emphasizing the dual attribute of military ferocity and hospitality. Support of the chief in battle was demanded of every warrior and to survive him was a criminal act: death in battle was glorious. One tantalizing account says that they believed that the souls of those who died in battle and were eaten by vultures went straight to heaven. Here, just possibly, is a reference to the rite of excarnation. Among at least one tribe, the Vaccaei, land and the harvest were the property of the community, and every year land was reapportioned to those who worked it. Many other anecdotes are recorded, such as Celtiberians drinking wine mixed with honey or cleaning their teeth with stale urine, but these add little to our understanding other than providing local colour. Taken together, then, the ancient sources are consistent in their belief in the Celtic ethnicity of the societies they encountered living beyond the more civilized Mediterranean-facing Iberians.

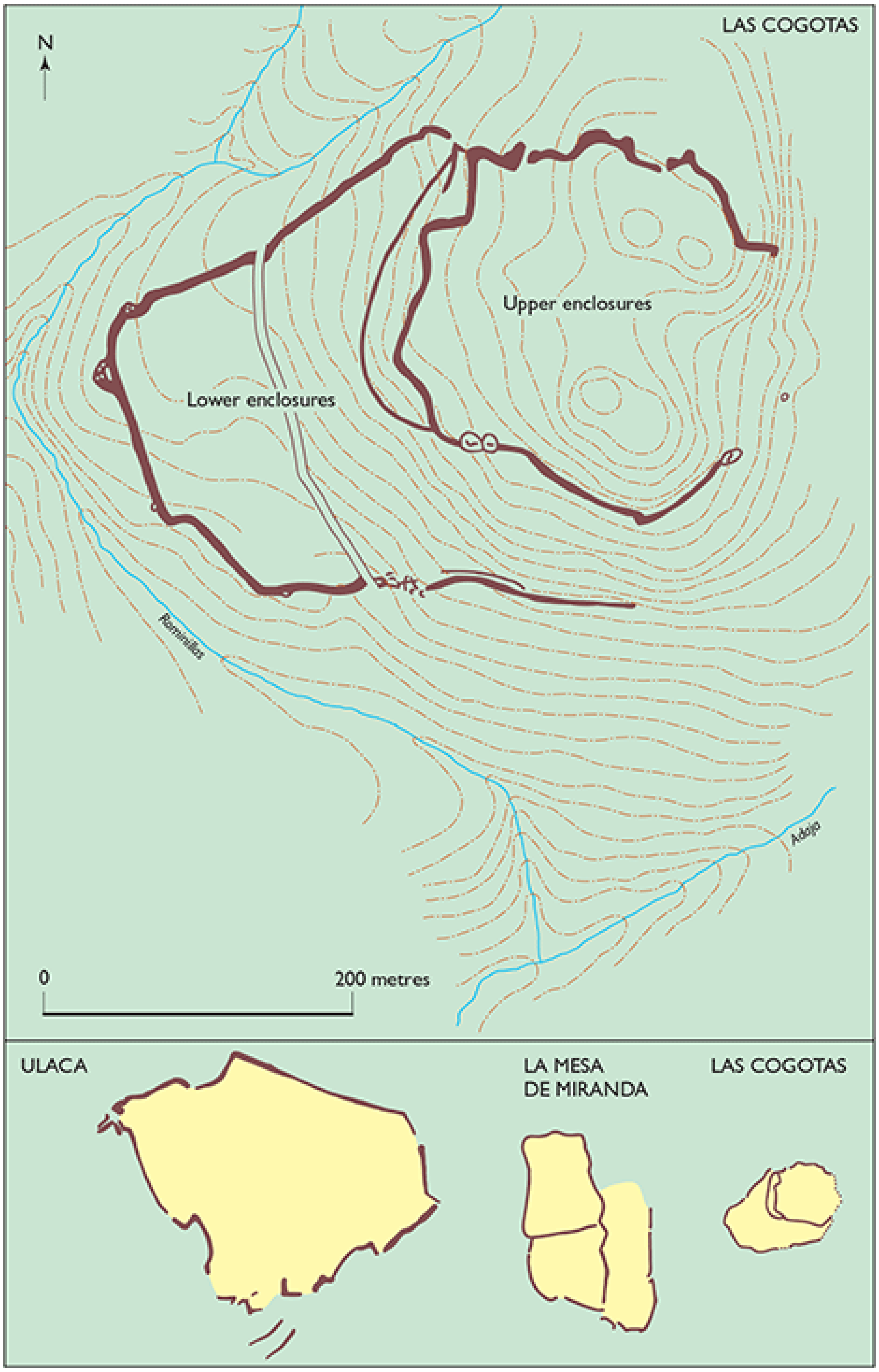


4.5 The Iberian peninsula, showing the focus of Celtiberian culture, together with the names of the principal Celtic tribes.

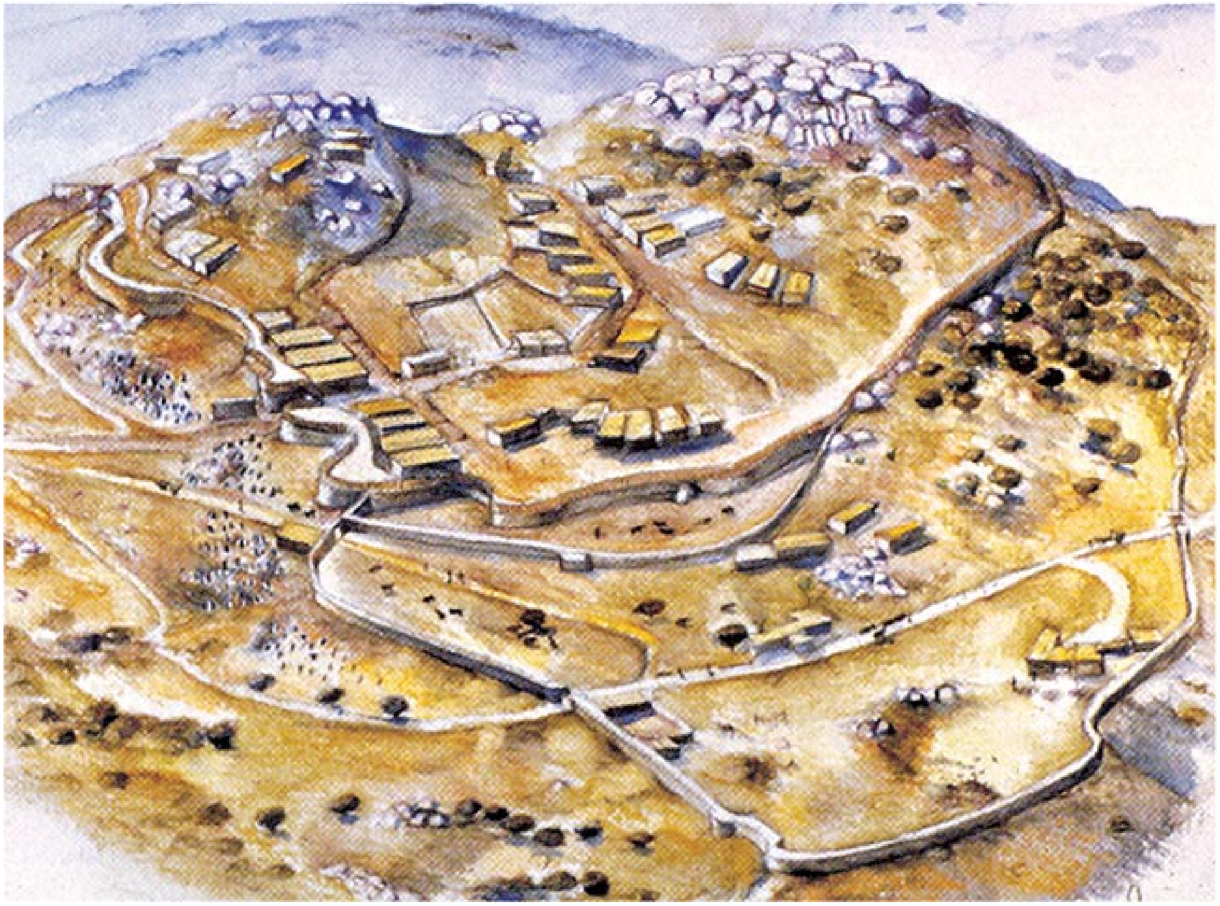
Celtiberian territory, stretching from the Ebro to the eastern Meseta, was flanked by the Atlantic communities in the west, the Iberians in the south and east, and the Urnfield culture to the north-east. Inevitably it absorbed cultural influences from all three. The harshness of parts of the territory, particularly the plains of the Meseta, desiccated during the summer months, demanded a degree of transhumance in the pastoral economy. The flocks and herds were taken to upland mountain pastures before the heat came and were brought down again in the autumn. Such conditions allowed a gradual increase in population and led to the emergence of an elite evidenced in a series of rich graves furnished with short swords, spears, and round shields, reflecting the warrior-based nature of society.

The principal burial rite was urned cremation, adopted from the Urnfield cultural zone to the north-east, but other elements came from the south and east, including geometric painted pottery, fibulae with two-part springs, and belt hooks, all characteristic of Tartessian culture. The short antennae-hilted iron sword was, however, a development specific to the north, extending, with regional variations, throughout the Celtiberian area and the Ebro valley, and across the Pyrenees into Languedoc and Aquitania.

From the sixth century BC the influence of stimuli from the cultures of the Mediterranean littoral and the developing Iberian hinterland intensified. By the fourth century the Celtiberians were using rotary querns and the potter's wheel. Celtiberian script, derived from Iberian, was in use by the third century, and large *oppida*-like settlements—again probably an Iberian inspiration—began to develop at about the same time or a little later.


LAS COGOTAS
N
Upper enclosures
Lower enclosures
Rominillas
Adaja
0
200 metres
ULACA
LA MESA
DE MIRANDA
LAS COGOTAS

4.6 The defences of Las Cogotas, Avíla, Spain, enclose in total some 14.5 hectares but only the upper enclosure was intensively occupied. Though large, it is by no means the largest of the *oppida* in the Ambles valley as the lower plans will demonstrate.



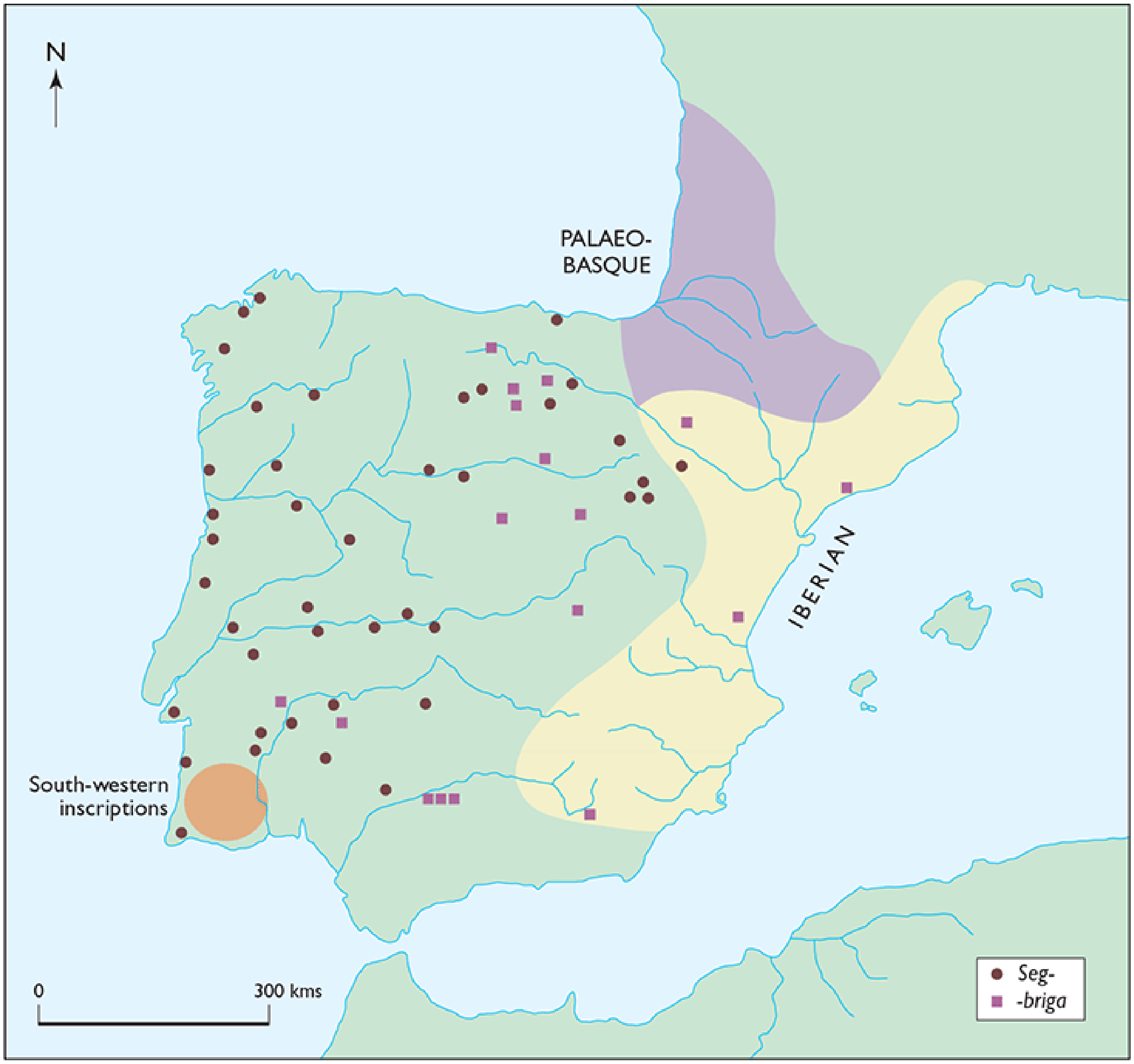
4.7 The *oppidum* of Las Cogotas is one of the better-known defended settlements of the Celtiberian region of Spain. It has been extensively excavated, as a result of which the arrangement of the interior buildings has been identified in outline allowing this artist's reconstruction to be offered.

The Celtic Language in Iberia

The origin and development of Palaeo-Hispanic languages has provided a fertile field for study and debate. There are many issues to be resolved but it is broadly agreed that the peninsula can be divided into three broad linguistic zones based on the common occurrence of distinctive toponyms. In the central and western Pyrenees and extending into Aquitania to the north a non-Indo-European language, Palaeo-Basque, was spoken, characterized by place names ending in -*os*, -*osse* and -*otz*. In the south and east there exists a concentration of place names ending in -*il(t)c* and -

il(t)u, which are also considered to be non-Indo-European: these correspond to the region that is culturally and historically identified with the Iberians. Over the rest of the country names ending in *-briga* and beginning with *Seg-* are comparatively widespread; these reflect the area within which a Celtic language was spoken.

When examined in more detail, however, something of the complexity of the situation becomes apparent. The zone of non-Indo-European place names extending through the Levantine–Catalan region can be divided into several different groups. Similarly within the broad *-briga* zone several linguistic sub-zones can be defined, the most distinctive being that spoken in the territory of the Lusitani and the Roman province of Gallaecia on the Atlantic coast, which is thought by some linguists to represent an archaic form of Celtic. There are also significant differences in language east and west of a divide which runs approximately through Oviedo and Mérida. None the less, these groups all belong to the broadly defined Celtic family of Indo-European.



4.8 The distribution of Celtic place names in Iberia gives some idea of the area of the peninsula over which the Celtic language was in use. Some of the Celtic name elements appear for the first time in Roman place names. Iberian and Palaeo-Basque are non-Indo-European languages.

Earlier linguistic studies have stressed that most of the Celtic which survives for study in Iberia is of the more ancient Q-Celtic form, implying an early development. There is, however, some evidence of P-Celtic in place names with the *-dunum* ending, suggesting to some linguists the possibility of a later influence. Since the *-dunum* names were found over only a limited territory, concentrating mainly in Catalonia, some have argued that a later Celtic influx through the Pyrenees was superimposed upon an already established and far more extensive Celtic-speaking region. Interpretations of this kind must be regarded as oversimplifications. At best the place-name evidence shows that Celtic, in various forms, was spoken over large areas of Iberia. The distribution of tribal names containing the elements *Galli*-, *Celti*- reflect the same broad distribution but they too are known only from later classical sources.

4.9 One of the longest inscriptions in the Celtiberian language was discovered at Botorrita near Saragossa in Spain. It was inscribed on both faces of a bronze plaque and is interpreted as a contract relating in some way to landownership. Museo Arqueológico Nacional, Madrid.

Besides the place-name evidence there are a number of inscriptions in the Celtic language. The territory of the Celtiberi has produced a growing corpus, mainly recording transactions of various kinds, inscribed, using Iberian script, on metal plaques. One of the largest, from Botorrita near Saragossa, runs to many lines, adding much to our understanding of the language, but none date before the first century BC. As mentioned above (p. 35), the earliest inscriptions written in Celtic, however, appear in the south-west, employing Phoenician script, and date back to the eighth century BC.

All that can safely be concluded, then, is that Celtic was being spoken in south-western Iberia by the eighth century and that by the second century it was in use throughout much of the peninsula apart from the Mediterranean zone.

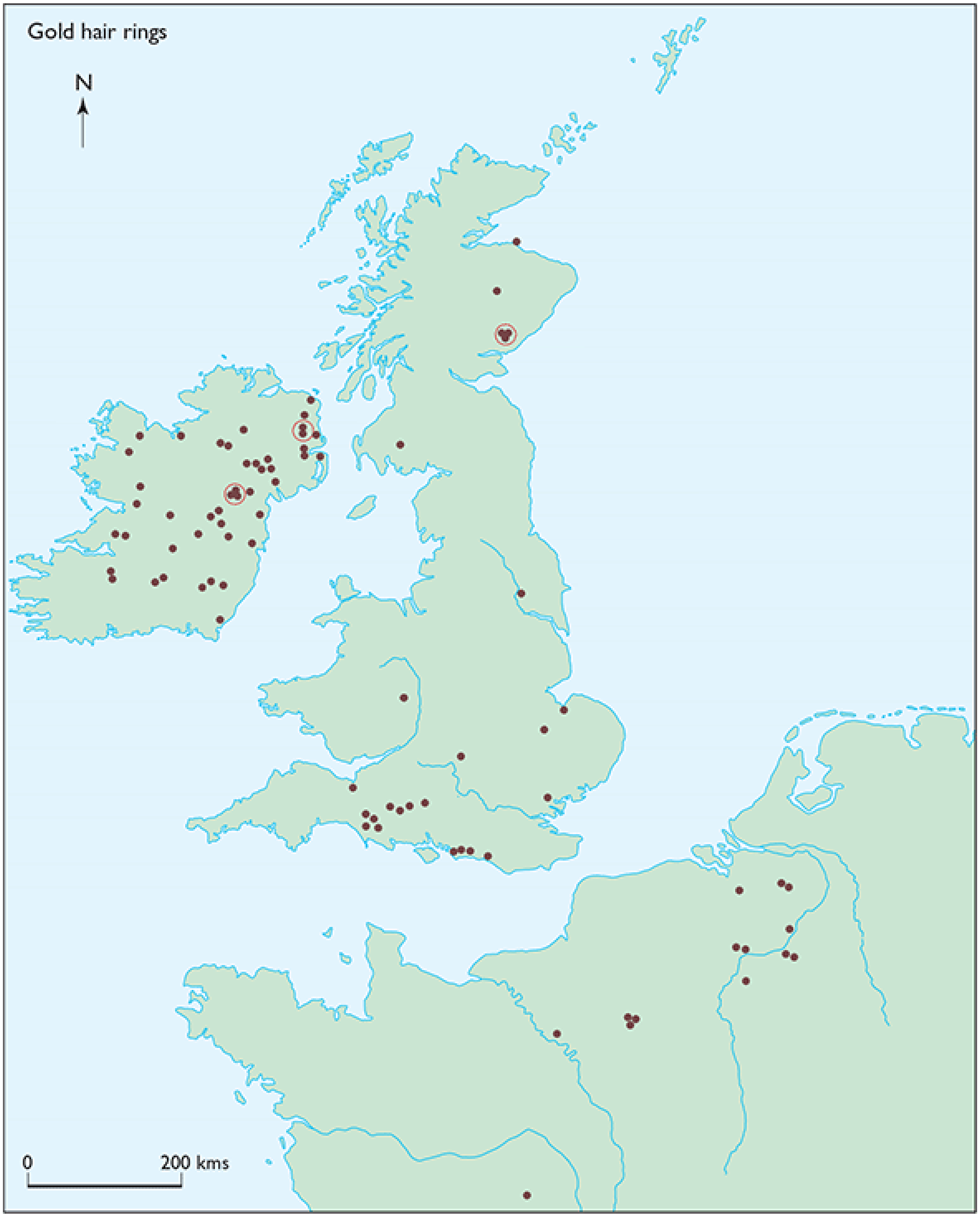
In the days when it was believed that the Celts and their language had arisen in west central Europe the debate focused on the question, when did Celtic-speaking people enter Spain? In the nineteenth century it was usual to link ‘Celts’ with the construction of megalithic tombs, more because the megaliths were at that time the best-known elements of the archaeological record than for any more positive reason. In the 1920s and 1930s, as an awareness of the complexity of the archaeological record grew, it was suggested that the Celtic advent was reflected in the material culture of the Urnfields of north-eastern Iberia. This, it was argued, was directly related to the culture of western and central Europe, which was the homeland of the Celts. Further study refined the view, leading to the 'two-Celtic-waves' theory. This saw an initial wave arriving from north of the Pyrenees about 1000 BC, with a second, more complex invasion bringing in new peoples in the sixth century. Another version of the same general theory held that there was only one phase of incomings, sometime in the eighth century. However, the demonstration that the Celtiberian zone and the distribution of the Iberian Urnfields were exclusive and that the language spoken in the Urnfield area was not Indo-European did much to undermine the traditional view. More recently some commentators have attempted, somewhat unconvincingly, to demonstrate that the Celtic incursion was the result of movements of the La Tène Celts.

If, however, we accept that the Celtic language developed as a lingua franca along the Atlantic seaways in the Neolithic or Early Bronze Age, all these difficulties fall away. In this scenario, which has been presented above in Chapter 3, Celtic became the language of the Atlantic communities and spread eastwards along the major river routes to the area where the Celtiberian tribes developed. The rise of the Celtiberian chiefdoms from the seventh to the fifth centuries could be ascribed to their central position between the metal-rich Atlantic zone and the consuming states of the Mediterranean zone in much the same way, as we will see (pp. 106–23), that Hallstatt chiefdoms of west central Europe owed much of their power to their ability to articulate exchanges between the resource-rich north and the Greek and Etruscan world. If the Celtiberian chiefdoms served as middlemen between west and east, then the beliefs of the classical writers that they were a fusion of Celts and Iberians can be understood.

The North-western Atlantic Zone: 1000–500 BC

As we have seen, the Phoenician penetration of the southern part of the Atlantic seaways around 900 BC drew Iberia into the Mediterranean sphere, leaving the northern part of the zone—north-western France, Britain, and Ireland—to develop in its own way. The severing of links meant that the Celtic dialects spoken in the two zones could now diverge: the Hispano-Celtic languages retained their archaic characteristics while the Celtic spoken in the northern zone continued to develop. This separation has been dated by phylogeographic analysis to *c*.900 BC, a date confirmed by the archaeological evidence.

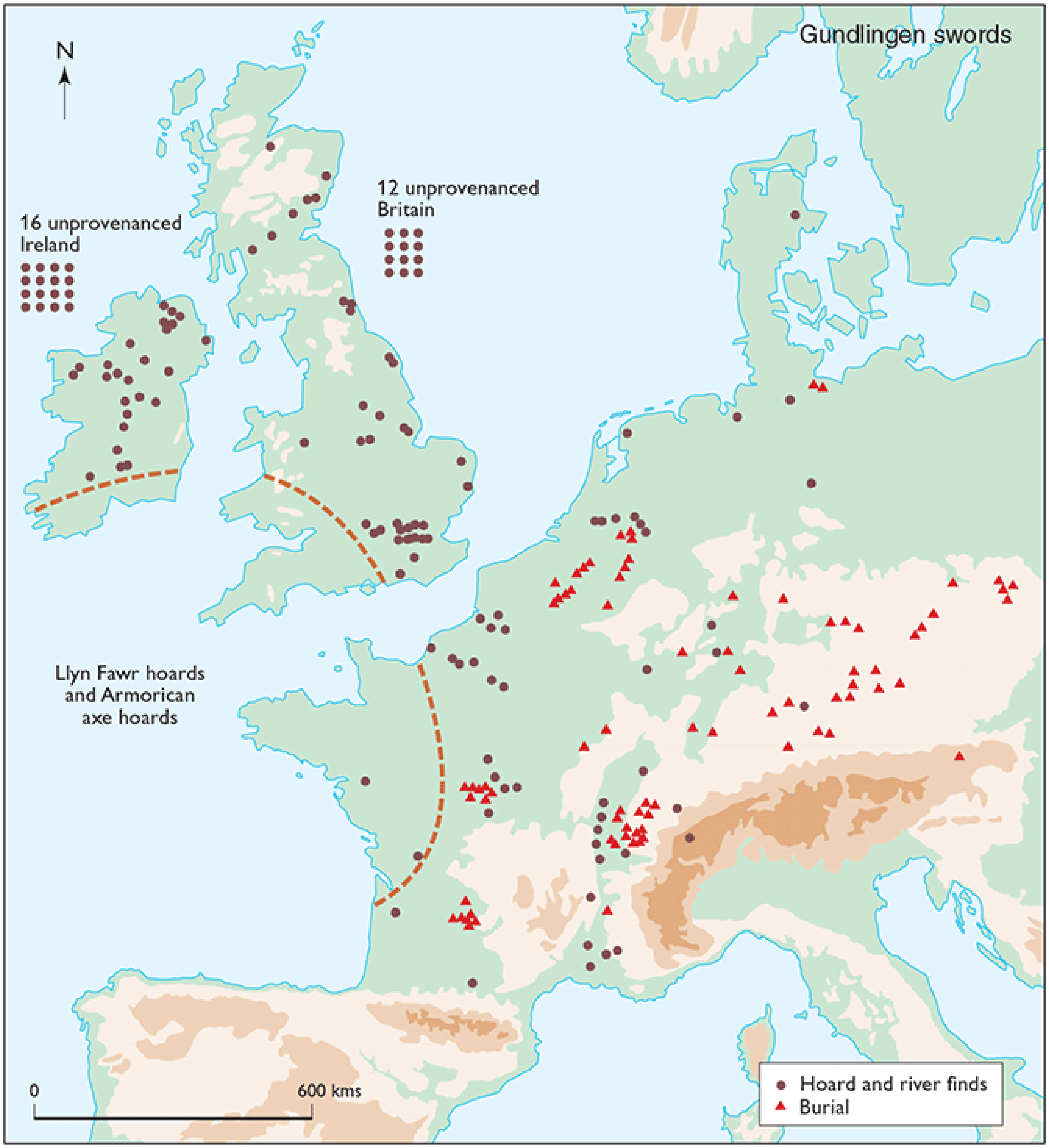
In the north-western Atlantic zone the archaeological evidence shows that Ireland and Britain continued to be linked with the Continent by way of the Channel and the southern North Sea. Elite artefacts were being shared between all the zones by the end of the first millennium. This is demonstrated by the distribution of gold hair rings made in Ireland and found there in some number. They also occur across southern Britain and in the Seine and Rhine valleys. A long slashing sword developed in Ireland in the twelfth century BC, named after an example found at Ballintober, which was also popular in southern Britain and in addition has been found in some numbers in the Seine valley and the Lower Loire. The basal-looped spearheads from Ireland were also distributed widely in Britain and throughout north-western France between the Rhine and the Garonne. By the end of the first millennium, then, Ireland, Britain, and north-western France were bound in networks of exchange which allowed commodities to flow eastwards from production areas in Ireland. Metal was also exported from the Continent to Britain. This is shown by the distribution of the Nantes type of carp's tongue sword, which occurs in considerable numbers in north-western France in the late tenth and early ninth centuries. As a weapon it was never adopted in Britain but it was imported as scrap metal into the south-east of the country with the intention of recycling. An indication of the scale of this process is provided by the Langdon Bay ship, which foundered in the thirteenth century BC in the shadow of the chalk cliffs of Dover. In all some 360 bronze tools and weapons were found, mostly Continental types, which were being brought into Britain as scrap metal for reuse.



4.10 Gold hair rings of the Late Bronze Age were manufactured in Ireland and distributed widely through networks linking to southern Britain and northern France. The distribution reflects the broad pattern of connectivity developing about 1000 BC.

In Britain the period from 800 to 600 BC, known as the Llyn Fawr Phase (after a lake deposit found in south Wales), was a time of significant change. Before that, huge quantities of metal were being taken out of circulation and deposited in the ground or in watery places as offerings to the chthonic deities. This practice rose to a peak in the ninth century and might indicate some kind of crisis which required divine intervention to assuage. What caused this response we will never know but one possibility is that it was crop failure caused by extremes of cold wet weather known to have occurred at this time. By 800 BC the deposition of hoards had virtually come to an end in eastern Britain. In central southern and south-western Britain and southern Ireland, deposits continued but in much reduced numbers, ceasing altogether in the mid-seventh century. In north-western France, however, huge hoards of Armorican axes were still being buried throughout the eighth and seventh centuries (above, p. 71). That Armorican axes were found in southern and south-western Britain and southern Ireland shows that contact continued. In other words, during the Llyn Fawr Phase these Atlantic regions maintained a degree of unity, exchanging artefacts and still making offerings to the chthonic deities.

Elsewhere in the north-west things were changing: hoarding was in sharp decline and it would seem that the social links between much of Ireland and Britain and large parts of France were intensifying. The artefact that best demonstrates this is a particular type of sword known as the Gundlingen variety, which was widely adopted throughout western and central Europe. Recent work has shown that Gundlingen swords developed from a southern British type sometime around 800 BC. Where exactly the new weapon evolved is uncertain but the most likely location was the Thames valley. Gundlingen swords quickly became popular over a large area extending from Ireland to west central Europe, but after the middle of the eighth century on the Continent they were replaced by a heavier iron sword known as the Mindelheim type.


Gundlingen swords
N
16 unprovenanced Ireland
12 unprovenanced Britain
Llyn Fawr hoards and Armorican axe hoards
0
600 kms
● Hoard and river finds
▲ Burial

4.11 In the early eighth century a distinctive type of sword, the Gundlingen type, developed probably in the Thames valley and became popular throughout much of western Europe, except for a zone in the extreme west where old traditions of burying hoards of axes persisted.

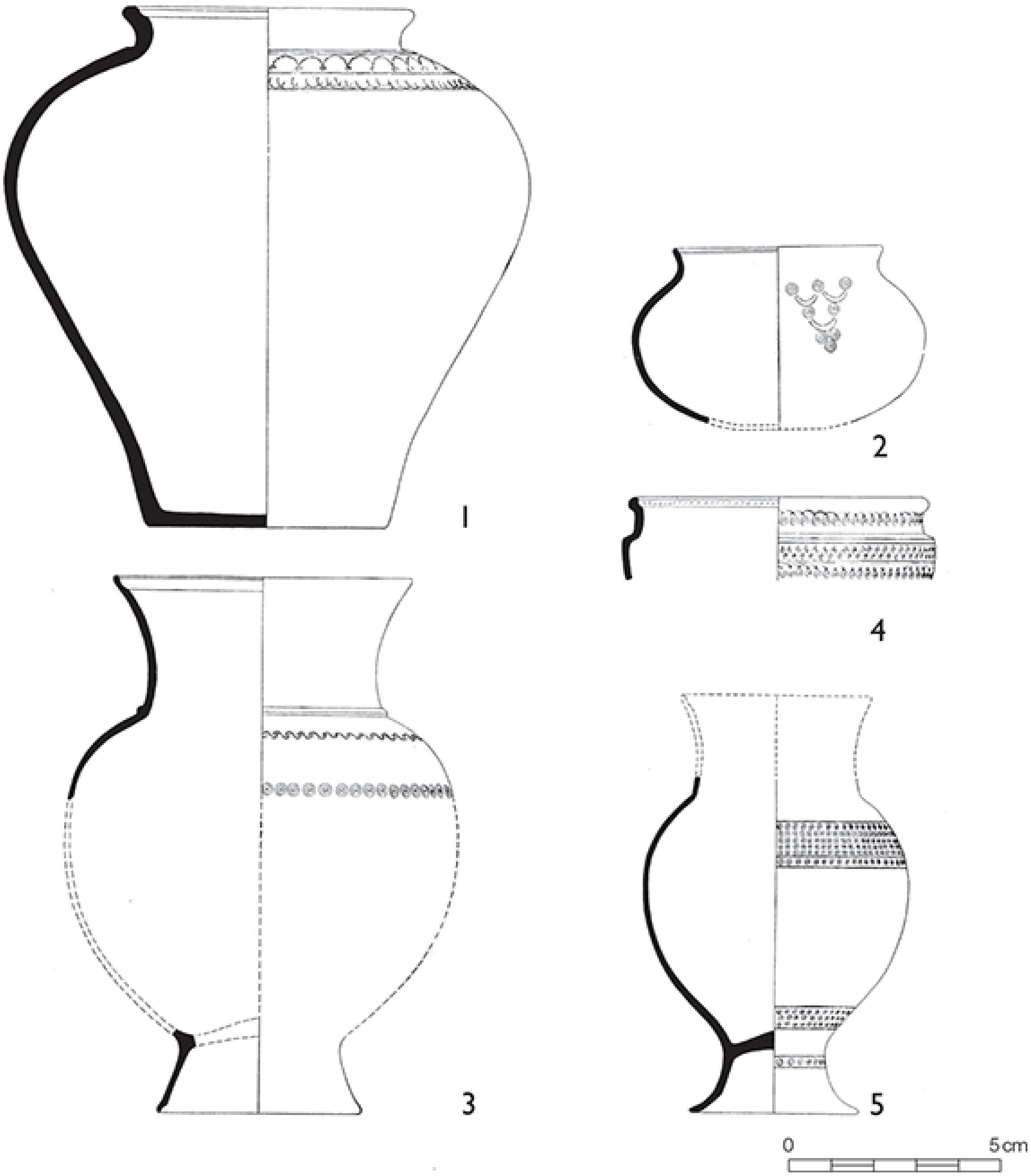
The swords were used by a horse-riding elite and on the Continent were often found in burials associated with sets of horse gear. In Britain, too, horse gear of the same Continental type is found, suggesting that

Continental horses and their tack featured in cycles of gift exchange which linked Britain and Ireland to the Continent. Other Continental items found in Britain at this time were brooches, which might hint that brides were also exchanged. The absence of Gundlingen swords in southern Ireland, south-western Britain and Armorica, and western France—areas where the old practice of hoard deposition persisted—implies that these extreme Atlantic regions remained outside the now strongly integrated zone extending from the northern part of Ireland to west central Europe.

Artefact distribution suggests that Britain retained its social links with the Continent throughout the seventh and sixth centuries, though now the imported items concentrate in the south-east, particularly the Thames valley. They include an antenna-hilted sword, a cauldron, a ribbed pail, a handle of a Rhodian flagon, and an iron dagger in a bronze sheath—all items that could have been exchanged between elites. The exotic daggers proved popular and a school of craftsmen grew up in the Thames valley making distinctive local versions. In terms of quantities of imports there seems to have been a progressive decline in the seventh and sixth centuries but it is as well to remember that other commodities such as wool, cloth, and slaves were probably regularly exchanged. The close cultural similarities in pottery forms and decoration between the communities of south-eastern Britain and the adjacent Continent are sufficient to suggest that strong contacts were maintained.

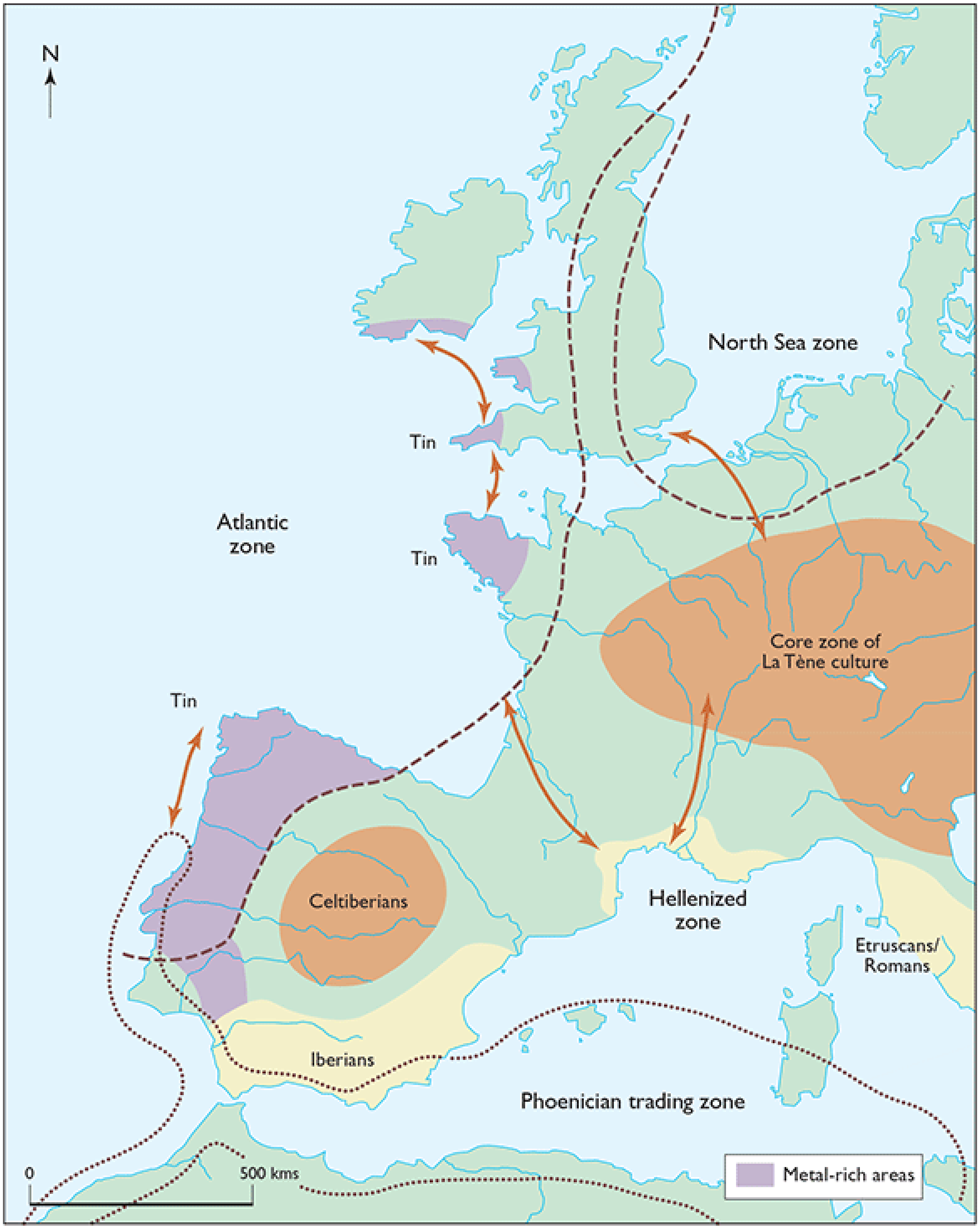
The rise of the chiefdoms of west central Europe in the Hallstatt D period (600–450 BC) described in the next chapter (pp. 106–23) would have created demands for goods which the traditional links with Britain could have helped to satisfy. Other regions were also drawn in. Brittany, which throughout the eighth and seventh centuries remained outside the zone of connectivity characterized by the Gundlingen swords, now began to develop links with west central Europe. Imported metalwork is rare (not least because soil conditions are not conducive to preservation) but two notable items, a fragment of a bronze oinochoe (jug) from the cemetery or shrine at TronoÃ«n and a decorated dagger scabbard from Kernavest, Quiberon, both represent alien elite goods. Even more dramatic is the development in Brittany of a highly distinctive style of stamp-decorated pottery which belongs to a broad category of stamped pottery found throughout central Europe in the fifth and fourth centuries (Map 24). The inspiration for the Breton vessels probably came from Late Hallstatt metalwork, such as the Kernavest scabbard, but the origin and chronology of the style is still unclear.

If it is accepted that the Breton stamped wares reflect intensified links with west central Europe then this could be seen as a reflection of the growing importance of the Armorican peninsula in providing access to the metal-producing Atlantic system. From here metals could have been transported along the Loire to the western extension of the Late Hallstatt chiefdom zone in Burgundy. The development of the Loire corridor would also explain the rise of Bourges as an elite centre (p. 116). At the same time Aquitania was drawn into the sphere of the Hallstatt chiefdoms. Hallstatt D daggers were here copied by local craftsmen and adapted to suit the demands of the local elite.



4.12 Stamped pottery from Brittany dating to the fifth century BC. No. 1 from Pludual, Côtes d’Armor; no. 2 from Kerhillio, Morbihan; no. 3 from Roz-an-Trémen, Finistère; no. 4 from Mané-Roullard, Morbihan; no. 5 from Saint-Martin-des-Champs, Finistère.

By about 600 BC, then, western France and southern Britain were part of an exchange network which incorporated much of west central Europe, serving as a productive periphery to the core zone of the West Hallstatt chiefdoms. Ireland and western Scotland seem no longer to have been part of the system since evidence of any significant contacts with the south-east is lacking. The separation of Ireland and western Scotland from the Continental system would provide an explanation for the divide between the Goidelic and Brythonic branches of the Celtic language, the Goidelic of the now remote west retaining archaic characteristics while the Brythonic of Britain and France continued to develop in parallel.


N
North Sea zone
Tin
Tin
Atlantic zone
Tin
Core zone of La Tène culture
Celtiberians
Hellenized zone
Etruscans/ Romans
Iberians
Phoenician trading zone
0
500 kms
Metal-rich areas

4.13 Atlantic Europe, indicating the main cultural zones in the second half of the first millennium BC.

The Celts and the Celtic Language in the North Part of the Atlantic Zone

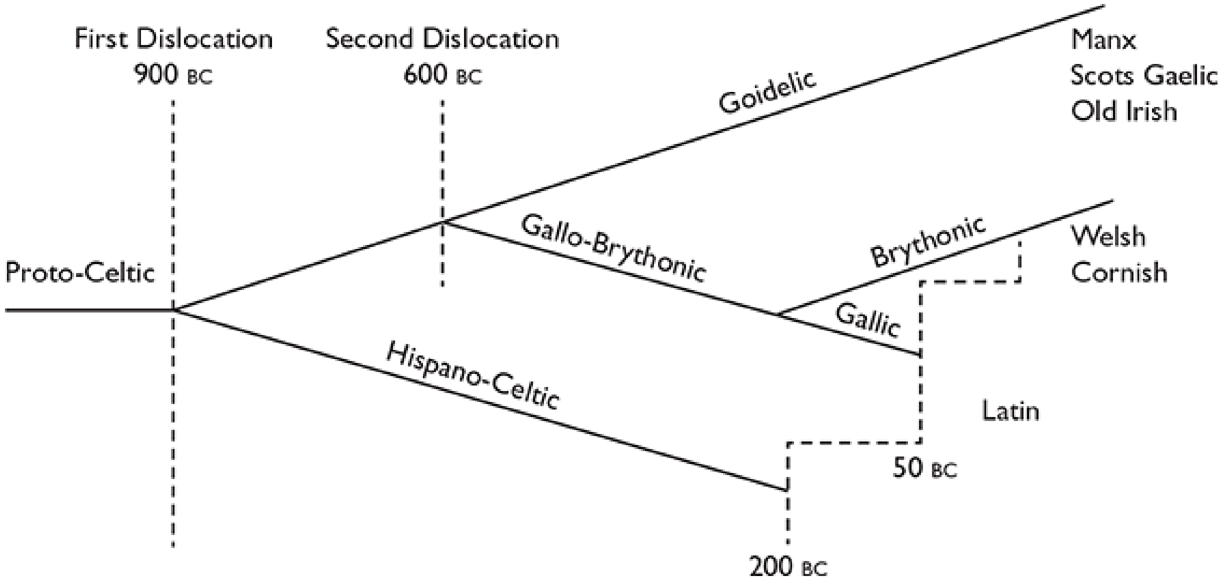
The place-name evidence shows that by the first century BC Celtic was spoken across Ireland, Britain, and France, but nowhere in that body of data is there any clue to when the language was first spoken. One argument for an early date that has been put forward is based on a rather muddled statement contained in the *Ora Maritima*, which employed a periplus probably compiled by a Massiliot sailor at the end of the sixth century BC (see p. 75). Loosely linked to this text is a reference to *insula Albionum* (Britain) and *gens Hiernorum* (the Irish race). The underlying forms are Celtic, *Albiones* (roughly ‘people of the living surface world’) and *Ierne* (‘people of the fertile earth’). Unfortunately there can be no certainty that this section was part of the original periplus. If, as seems more likely, it comes from a different source, then it need not date to the sixth century, as has been suggested. Indeed these references to Britain and Ireland may have been taken from the later work *On the Ocean* of Pytheas of Massalia, who, about 320 BC, sailed around Brittany and Britain, having crossed from Massalia to the mouth of the Gironde before taking ship. None of the few surviving fragments ascribed to Pytheas mentions the Albiones or Ierne but he does call the inhabitants of Britain *Pretani*, a Gallo-Brythonic word meaning ‘the painted ones’. This apparent confusion could be resolved by supposing that *Albionum* and *Ierne* were the names used for the islands by the inhabitants while *Pretani* was the somewhat derogatory name used by the Gauls to refer to their tattooed neighbours. At any rate Celtic was certainly being spoken in these regions by the time of Pytheas’ epic journey at the end of the fourth century BC.

Pytheas makes another contribution to the Celtic debate. Sailing from the mouth of the Gironde he describes having to sail far to the west in order to get round the projecting landmass that is Armorica. This he refers to as *Keltice¯*. Nearly three centuries later Julius Caesar shared a similar understanding of geography. In the opening paragraphs of the first book of his *Commentaries on the Gallic War* he offers a sketch of the ethnic structure of Gaul:

> Gaul as a whole consists of three separate parts; one is inhabited by the Belgae, another by the Aquitani, and the third by the people we call Gauls, though in their own language they are called Celts. In language, customs, and laws these three peoples are quite distinct. The Celts are separated from the Aquitani by the river Garonne and from the Belgae by the Marne and the Seine.
>
> (*De Bello Gallico* 1. 1)

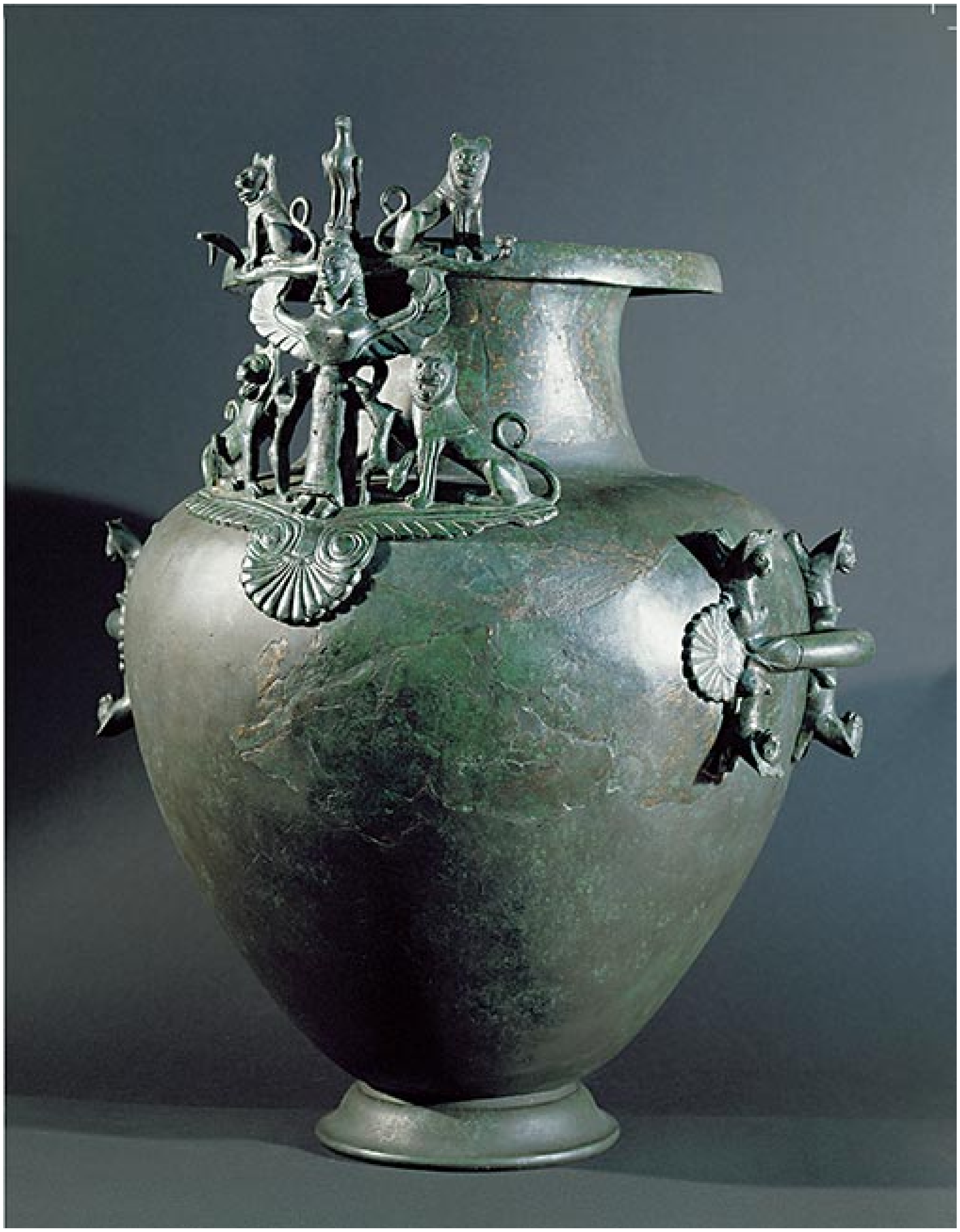
The description is admirably clear and explicit, and while it may contain a degree of oversimplification, either through ignorance or to aid his audience, there is no reason not to accept it as a fair summing up of the situation in the mid-first century BC. The implication of Caesar's statement is that a broad swathe of Gaul, bounded by the Gironde and the Seine, and stretching from the Atlantic to the Mediterranean, was occupied by Celts. This is supported by Hecataeus, writing in the sixth century, who regarded Narbo (Narbonne) as Celtic and said that Massalia, though in the land of the Ligurians, was close to the territory of the Celts (above, p. 4). For Caesar the Aquitanians were culturally different and spoke a different language, which we can recognize from the place-name evidence as Palaeo-Basque. The Belgae in the north of France were also regarded as different. This may have been because of the spread of German speakers into the region in the century or so before.

The linguistic evidence, such as it is, is by no means conclusive but is entirely consistent with the view that Celtic was spoken in Ireland, Britain, and western France from early times, though no classical writer is known to have claimed that the British or Irish referred to themselves as Celtic, unlike the Gauls. From the place-name evidence and from the surviving Celtic languages, Irish, Scottish, Gaelic, Welsh, Manx, Breton, and Cornish (recently revived), linguists can distinguish two language groups, Goidelic spoken in Ireland and Scotland, and Brythonic spoken in England, Wales, and France. How this split came about is a matter of debate but, as we have argued above (pp. 87–8), the archaeological evidence pointing to the separation of Ireland and western Scotland from the rest of the region by the sixth century provides a possible context for language divergence.


First Dislocation
900 BC
Second Dislocation
600 BC
Goidelic
Manx
Scots Gaelic
Old Irish
Gallo-Brythonic
Brythonic
Welsh
Cornish
Proto-Celtic
Gallic
Hispano-Celtic
Latin
50 BC
200 BC

4.14 Diagram to illustrate the development of the major Celtic languages in the west with a chronology attached.

Standing back from all the detail the simplest model which best fits the archaeological and linguistic evidence is that the Celtic language had already developed as a lingua franca by the Late Bronze Age, by which time it was spoken along the entire Atlantic zone from south-western Iberia to Scotland. The first dislocation of the Atlantic network around 900 BC left the Hispano-Celtic dialects to develop in isolation, while the second dislocation, around 600 BC, left Ireland and western Scotland isolated. It was here that the Goidelic branch emerged, leaving the rest of the British Isles and France to continue to evolve their own dialects, collectively called Brythonic. Such a model, driven by the archaeological data, needs no recourse to theories involving complex invasions for which, anyway, there is no archaeological or DNA evidence.



5

West Central Europe and the Mediterranean

1300–450 BC

THE two centuries from 1300 to 1100 BC were a period of transition. They marked the end of an early cycle of food-producing economies (traditionally the Neolithic to the end of the Middle Bronze Age), which had culminated in the emergence of the Aegean-centred Mycenaean–Minoan ‘civilization’, and the beginning of a new cycle which was to see the rise and eventual fall of the broader, Mediterranean-centred, Graeco-Roman world. At its maximum extent, in the third century AD, the Roman empire was to stretch from the desert fringes of Africa in the south to the forests of the North European Plain and from the eastern deserts to the Atlantic. The collapse of that system in the fourth and fifth centuries AD created a turmoil from which certain western European states were to emerge to become, for a brief interlude from the late fifteenth to the early twentieth century, the centre of a world system.

It is within this ‘middle cycle’—1300 BC– AD 450—that the communities speaking a Celtic language and known to contemporary writers as an ethnically distinctive people called Celts or Gauls made their dramatic and lasting impact on the consciousness of their literate neighbours. To understand the origins of the emergence of the historic Celts we must begin by considering the world they were to inhabit.

The Aegean World: Before 1000 BC

Europe’s first civilization, the Minoans, focused on the island of Crete, began its spectacular development about 3000 BC, reaching its peak of energy and influence by the middle of the second millennium BC, by which time the island had become a centre for a widely flung exchange network linking the Aegean coasts of Asia Minor with the mainland of Greece. It was here, centred largely on the Peloponnese, that a peripheral zone developed whose archaeological manifestation is known as Mycenaean and whose society is dimly reflected in the epic tradition later codified by Homer. By the middle of the second millennium BC Mycenaean power had developed to such an extent that over the next two centuries its influence was to spread not only to the Minoan homeland of Crete but also to the Asia Minor coast and the island of Rhodes in the east and to southern Italy and Sicily in the west, its distinctive pottery eventually reaching as far west as AndalucÃa.

The Mycenaean–Minoan civilization created a centralizing focus in the Aegean, which lay at the core of a complex network of exchange contacts drawing commodities from Egypt in the south, most notably ivory, and from central, western, and northern Europe, whence came such desirable raw materials as tin, copper, gold, amber, and probably furs. The relative stability of the system over the period 1600–1200 BC gave time for the networks of exchange to become consolidated, and those barbarian communities commanding rare resources or trade routes began to benefit in a variety of ways from these long-distance exchanges.

During this time, in the heart of Anatolia, the Hittites were reaching the peak of their development. One of their particular achievements was iron production, a skill at this stage largely unknown in the Mediterranean and Europe. Iron was at first a rare and highly valued commodity which appears to have been used principally for aristocratic gift exchanges. The iron-bladed dagger in the tomb of Tutankhamun (1352 BC) was precisely such a gift. One of the Hittite texts dating to the thirteenth century gives a fascinating insight into exchanges at this time. It is a letter from the Hittite king Hattusilis III to the king of Assyria, responding to a request for iron. He says that no good iron is being made at the moment, but as soon as some is produced he will send it, meanwhile 'Today I am dispatching an iron dagger blade to you.'

The stability of the late second-millennium world was shaken and eventually gave way in a series of convulsions in the twelfth and eleventh centuries BC—the period known as the Greek Dark Ages. Many reasons have been suggested for this complex and ill-understood dislocation: folk movement from the barbarian north, overpopulation, plague. Whether there were, indeed, significant prime causes or simply a systems-collapse brought about by a number of interacting or self-intensifying factors is difficult to say from the ill-focused archaeological evidence. What is clear is that it was a period of folk mobility during which much of the old order disappeared. Surviving texts refer to the raids of the 'Sea People' who impinged upon coastal Egypt. There were major population replacements in Cyprus, while both the kingdoms of the Levant and the Hittite empire collapsed. In the Peloponnese—the focus of Mycenaean culture—the aristocratic power centres all but disappeared and a major decline in population is evident.

It is possible that the ripples of these momentous events were felt in the western Mediterranean. The Shardana in Sardinia and the Sikels in Sicily may have migrated from the eastern Mediterranean at this time. If so, the new settlers were simply following long-established maritime trading routes to the west.

The impact of the Aegean systems-collapse on the European hinterland was considerable. Existing exchange systems broke down or were transformed. Some communities, once part of European-wide networks, found themselves isolated and new configurations emerged.

The Re-Formation: 1000–800 BC

The first two centuries of the first millennium BC constituted a crucial period in the formation of Europe. During this time the principal social and economic groupings that were to dominate the scene for over a millennium began to crystallize.

In the Aegean, complex movements of Greek-speaking communities led to a repopulation of some areas of Greece and a reinvigoration of others, while from here some groups moved eastwards across the Aegean, settling the islands and eventually carving out for themselves a foothold on the peninsulas and sheltered havens of the Aegean coast of Asia Minor, where three broad configurations were to emerge: Aeolians in the north, Ionians in the centre, and Dorians in the south. No doubt many of these early immigrant communities mixed with the local populations—the Lycians, the Legians, and the Carians—absorbing new genes and forming new cultures. For many, particularly the Ionians, it was a time of experiment and energy from which emerged the earliest and most vital manifestations of Greek culture. Significantly, according to tradition, it was in one of the Ionian cities, either Smyrna or Chios, that the epics with which we associate the name of Homer were first written down.

The Greek enclaves on the coast of Asia Minor provided an interface between the Aegean and the rising power of the Persians in the east, buffered for a while by powerful inland states such as the Lydians. They were thus able to benefit from the culture of their eastern landlocked neighbours, while at the same time becoming part of the maritime world of the Mediterranean.

The Levantine coast (now Syria, Lebanon, and Israel) also developed a culturally distinctive maritime interface—peopled by communities collectively known as Phoenicians, whose cities, Byblos, Tyre, and Sidon, became famous for trading ventures reaching to the Atlantic (above, pp. 72–4). To the east of them lay the empires of the Assyrians and Babylonians, whose lavish consumption of luxury goods provided the motivation behind much of the Phoenician commercial enterprise.

Both the eastern Greeks and the Phoenicians were to have a significant impact on barbarian Europe, and the subjugation in the sixth century BC of both coastal interfaces, Greek Asia Minor by the Persians and Phoenicia by the Babylonians, was further to influence the course of barbarian development.

It was during this period that new cultural configurations were developing on the Pontic steppe along the northern shores of the Black Sea. The area had long been settled by communities who depended upon the horse and horse-drawn vehicles to enable them to maintain a degree of nomadic mobility over the huge tracts of steppe which they inhabited. Archaeologically these communities are known, from their favoured burial mode, as the Catacomb culture.

In the eastern hinterland, roughly centred on the middle stretches of the Volga river, another semi-nomadic group developed, adopting a different burial rite: a wooden cabin-like grave set in a pit beneath a barrow mound. These burials typified what has been termed the Timber Grave culture. The archaeological evidence suggests that this culture expanded westwards during the early centuries of the first millennium, eventually taking over much of the Pontic steppe region previously occupied by the Catacomb culture. The *Histories* of Herodotus, written in the early fifth century BC, describe a group known as the Cimmerians, who originally occupied the northern shores of the Black Sea and were ousted by Scythians coming from the east. Some writers have associated the Cimmerians with the archaeologically defined Catacomb culture and the Scythians with the Timber Grave culture, though the exact chronology of the events, or whether the displacement of the Cimmerians was as simple as the literary account suggests, remains unclear. Some additional support for the turbulent nature of the times is given in Assyrian tablets, which refer to both the Cimmerians and the Scythians as hordes of warlike horsemen serving as mercenaries in the conflicts which played out in Asia Minor in the eighth and seventh centuries.

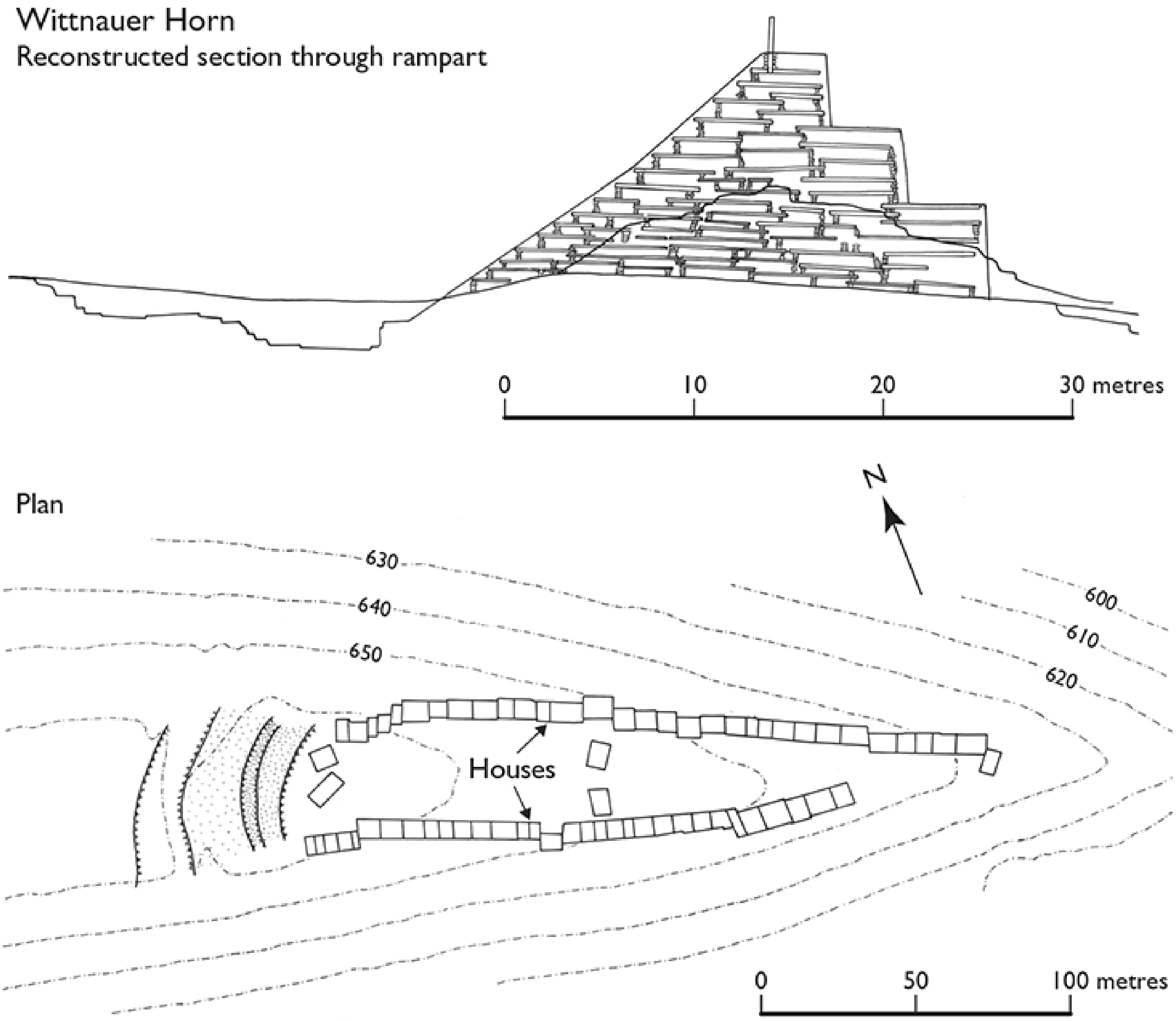
From the point of view of our present concerns, what is of particular interest is the evidence of unrest and folk movement among the horse riders of the Pontic steppe, which built to a peak in the eighth century, when some moved south-east into Asia Minor. Given the geography of the region and the fact that the western shores of the Black Sea, including the Lower Danube region, are really an extension of the steppe, it is not unreasonable to suggest, as many archaeologists have done, that there was a parallel movement of Cimmerians westwards along the Danube into central Europe. It is a suggestion to which we shall return.

The western fringe of Europe, facing the Atlantic, was altogether different. Here, in a broad arc reaching from Scotland to south-western Iberia, the maritime communities were linked in a complex of exchange networks probably stretching back in time at least to the Neolithic period. By the Bronze Age metals were among the more important commodities shipped: copper from Ireland, Wales, and western Iberia; tin from Cornwall, Brittany, and Galicia; and gold from Ireland, Wales, and north-western Iberia. This metal-rich arc will have provided much of the bronze and gold circulating in western Europe, and the enhanced consumption of metal in the Aegean may well have provided a market eager for gold and tin from the Atlantic zone. With the collapse of the Mycenaean–Minoan centre, demand would have slackened, but there is ample evidence for a still-vigorous zone of contact along the seaways. In so far as the archaeological evidence allows us to estimate, there seems to have been an intensification of activity in the ninth century, occasioned, as we have suggested in Chapter 4, by developing Phoenician interests in the south-west of Iberia.

In the heart of Europe, extending from eastern France to Hungary and from Italy to Poland, there emerged in the period from about 1300 to 800 BC a considerable degree of cultural uniformity indicative of convergent development. This is called the Urnfield period and the broadly defined culture which it represents shares the name (Map 1). The characteristic which serves to give the impression of uniformity is the burial rite, which involves the interment of the cremated remains of the dead in cinerary urns clustered in well-defined cemeteries. In addition to this, the varied array of cast and beaten bronze-work, in the form of personal ornaments, tools, and weapons, shows considerable stylistic similarities over large areas.

The origin and development of the Urnfield cultural continuum is a much debated issue. It is probably best to see an initial phase of development in the period 1300–1150 BC in the zone north of the Alps responding to the dislocations and reorderings occasioned by the decline and collapse of the Mycenaean–Minoan world. In the Middle and Lower Danube region long-established tell settlements were widely abandoned during this formative period and an entirely new settlement pattern emerged. The evidence, fragmentary though it is, suggests a phase of disruption and upheaval which may, in some way, be related to events in the Aegean.

Urnfield developments in the Hungarian region preceded those in the Alpine zone to the west, where there is no direct evidence of major disruption but rather an internal development linked to an intensification of contact southwards through the Alps to the Po valley and beyond, across the Apennines and deep into peninsular Italy. By 1000 BC Italy, the Alps, and Transalpine Europe from eastern France to Slovakia were closely interlinked, as similarities in material culture so vividly demonstrate.


Wittnauer Horn
Reconstructed section through rampart
0
10
20
30 metres
Plan
N
630
640
650
600
610
620
Houses
0
50
100 metres

5.1 The Late Bronze Age fortified settlement of Wittnauer Horn, Aargau, Switzerland. The site occupied a ridge-end protected by a massive rampart. The houses inside were arranged in a regular fashion around a central open area.

The Alpine and Transalpine zones of the Urnfield culture enjoyed a degree of social and economic stability. In several areas there appears to have been a marked rise in population, with the appearance of new settlements closely spaced in an increasingly farmed landscape. In parallel with this, copper production intensified, particularly in the metal-rich zone of the eastern Alps. Hillforts, quite often spurs cut off by massive timber-laced ramparts, were constructed in some number, indicating that the coercive power of some sector of the population was now able to command surplus labour to aggrandize or protect a chosen settlement.

That this power may have been that of a leading individual or lineage is suggested by the occurrence of certain burials more elaborately furnished than others and, in particular, by the appearance of horse trappings, indicative of the riding horse or horse-drawn vehicle of the warrior or aristocrat.

The Foundation of the New Order: 800–650 BC

The eighth century BC was a formative period in the history of Europe: in the Mediterranean it saw the beginnings of the Greek colonial adventure and the further development of the far-flung Phoenician trading system, while in barbarian Europe the infiltration of Pontic steppe communities into the Great Hungarian Plain made the horse even more readily available to the emerging Hallstatt aristocracy of central and western Europe. These various threads need to be explored, for together they provide the essential basis for developments throughout the rest of the millennium.

Towards the beginning of the century inhabitants of the two Ionian city-states of Chalcis and Eretria on the island of Euboea, at first together and later separately, began to sail through the Strait of Messina to explore the resources of the coasts of the Tyrrhenian Sea between the Italian peninsula and the islands of Corsica and Sardinia (Map 6). In doing so they were echoing journeys made centuries before by travellers from the Mycenaean world. Among the attractions they discovered were the rich metal resources of Etruria and the adjacent island of Elba. By about 770 BC they had founded a colonial settlement at Pithekoussai on the island of Ischia in the Bay of Naples, admirably sited as a forward post to trade with the Etruscan metal producers. A little later a new establishment was set up on the nearby mainland coast at Cumae.

From these early beginnings followed the rapid colonization of Mezzogiorno and Sicily. Zancle (Messina) was founded on the north-eastern extremity of Sicily, with Rhegion (Reggio di Calabria) on the opposite Italian coast. Naxos was founded further down the coast. Soon other Greek city-states joined in. Rhodes may have been early on the scene, while Megara established Megara Hyblaea in the mid-eighth century south of Naxos. The primary colonization of the east coast of Sicily was completed by the Corinthian foundation of Syracuse, traditionally in 733 BC. In the following two centuries many more Greek colonies claimed intervening territories, until the region could justify its name of Magna Graecia.

The establishment of a Greek presence just beyond the southern fringe of Etruscan territory provided a significant stimulus to the development of Etruscan culture. In this way Corinth was able to play an important part in introducing Greek culture to the Etruscan aristocracy, and in the seventh century, according to Pliny, Corinthian artists were well established in Etruria. But it would be wrong to assume that Greek colonists were the sole contact. A more likely scenario is that the foundation of the Greek colonies encouraged maritime trade to develop rapidly, providing a framework of safe havens to allow sailors and merchants from many countries to explore and to trade. Along with the Greek merchants would have come others, including Phoenicians, bringing a range of exotic goods and ideas from the eastern Mediterranean in return for iron, copper, and silver from Elba and the Colline Metallifere just north of Populonia and Vetulonia.

The appearance of a range of luxury goods added a stimulus to social development in the late Villanovan culture of Etruria. Cities began to grow, providing an opportunity for the aristocracy to manipulate the newly available prestige goods and thus to consolidate and enhance the status of themselves and their lineages. Towards the end of the eighth century BC these ‘orientalizing’ influences were well under way in Etruria. The coastal cities, growing commercially ever stronger, began to develop maritime interests of their own, which, in the seventh century, were to expand through the Tyrrhenian Sea and westwards to the coasts of Gaul and Iberia.

In parallel with the expansion of Greek influence in the western Mediterranean and the rising power of the Etruscans, the Phoenicians of the Levant continued to establish as far west as the Atlantic their own trading enclaves, which had originally been founded as early as the tenth century (above, pp. 72–4) (Map 7). The eighth century saw a consolidation of the Phoenician sea routes, via Tunisia, western Sicily, and Sardinia to southern AndalucÃa and Cadiz (Phoenician Gadir), and a dramatic intensification of trade with the west. The main attraction appears to have been metals and in particular silver, produced in huge quantities from the metal-rich pyrite zone of the Rio Tinto and Sierra Morena. This region—

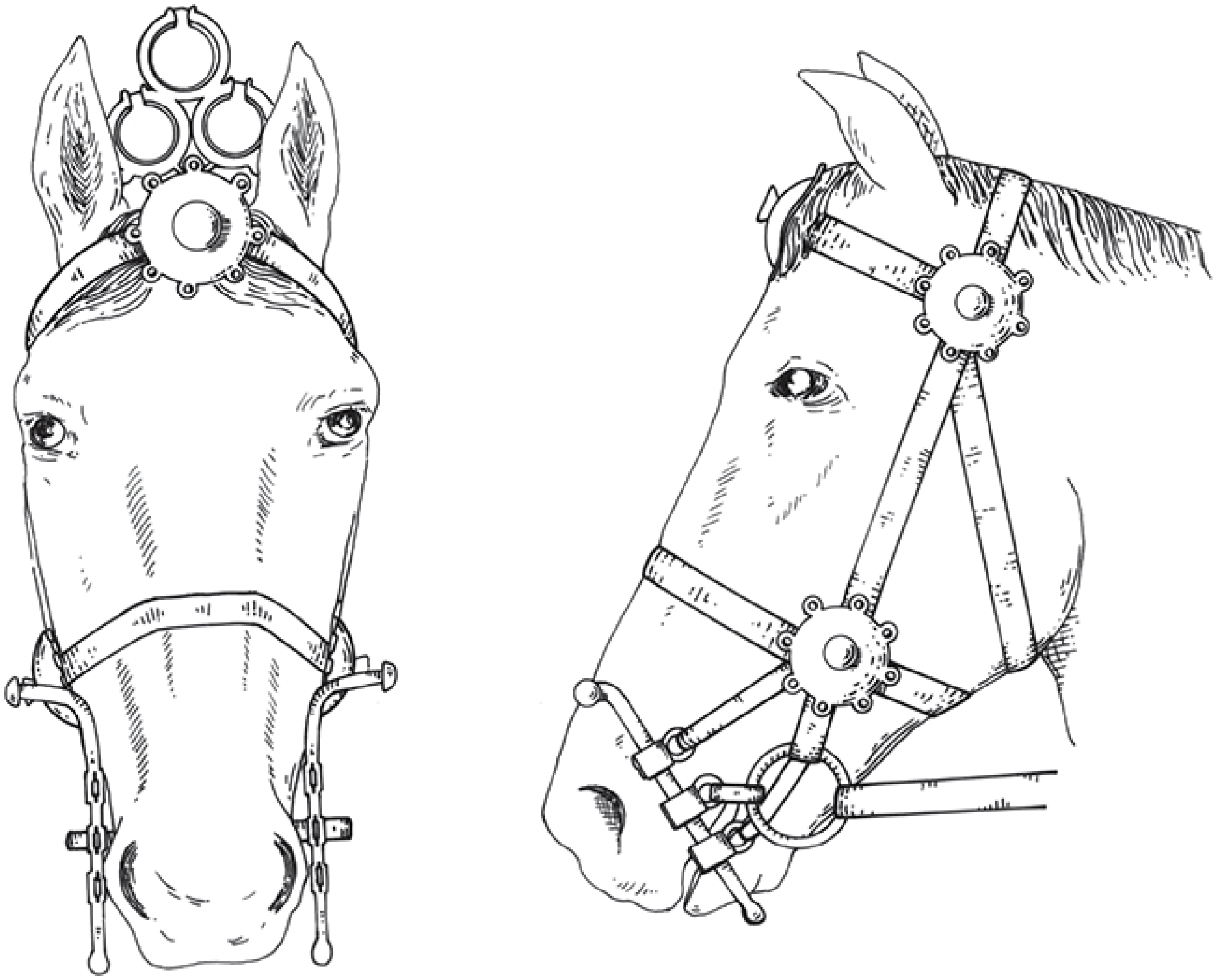
the kingdom of Tartessos—developed close links with the Phoenicians at Cadiz, and the amount of silver exported became legendary. In return, eastern goods and craft skills became available to the Tartessian aristocracy, and Tartessian culture, like that of Etruria, experienced a rapid phase of 'orientalization', most readily apparent in the luxury goods found in the graves of the local aristocracy in the eighth and seventh centuries. The effect of the developing Phoenician interest in Iberia was, as we have seen (pp. 74–5), to draw the Atlantic coast of the peninsula and of North Africa into the Mediterranean sphere, dislocating the old connectivities of the Atlantic Bronze Age.

At the eastern approaches to Europe, we saw how the semi-nomadic communities of the Pontic steppe known to classical writers as the Cimmerians were experiencing a phase of turbulence and disruption resulting in folk movement (above, p. 96). The Cimmerian penetration of eastern Europe is a complex issue which has been much debated. The principal argument for the presence of a 'Pontic' element rests on sets of bronze horse gear—bits, side pieces, and phalerae from the harnesses—found extensively distributed over much of the territory of Hungary, often associated with local items of the eighth and seventh centuries. The eastern (Pontic) inspiration, if not the production, of this material is clear. Other 'eastern' items, found less frequently, are short bronze daggers and bird-headed rattles from the tops of ceremonial staffs. Excavations at Mezoőácsát and at nearby sites in the north of the Great Hungarian Plain have identified a series of cemeteries which may well belong to immigrant groups, while similar enclaves in the south of the plain suggest that settlement may have been widespread.

Interpretation of this kind of archaeological evidence is not straightforward, but the simplest explanation would be to see groups of people moving from the turbulent areas of the Pontic steppe westwards along the Danube valley into the Great Hungarian Plain, an area of steppe geographically similar to their homeland, bringing with them their breeding stock of horses superior in speed and strength to the west European breed. Once established to the east of the Danube, and maintaining their links with their ancestral homelands, these new neighbours to the Urnfield cultures of central and western Europe would have been well placed to trade superior horses and their gear to the Hallstatt aristocracies, introducing at the same time new concepts of horse-riding. Although the horse was already a symbol of status among Urnfield communities, the presence of enclaves of horse riders close to the eastern frontier provided a ready supply of well-trained beasts.

Within the old Urnfield zone of west central Europe, bounded on the west by the communities of the Atlantic arc, on the east by the Pontic communities of the Great Hungarian Plain, and on the south by the Alps, significant changes can be detected after the beginning of the eighth century BC. This period, dating from *c*.800 to 600 BC, is referred to as the Hallstatt C culture, a generalized term which reflects a broad cultural continuum shared by a variety of distinctive regional groupings. It is at the aristocratic level that the culture is most universal, being reflected in the widespread distribution of warrior gear, in particular the Gundlingen long sword, a type originating in the Atlantic zone (Maps 3 and 4), a distinctive array of chapes with which the sword sheath terminated, and the trappings for horses both as cavalry beasts and yoked in pairs for pulling vehicles. The distribution of these various artefacts demonstrates a core area stretching in a broad zone from central France to Bohemia and Hungary. The number of more isolated finds found further afield indicates the huge peripheral territory linked by systems of exchange to this core.

Within the Hallstatt C cemeteries it is possible to distinguish different sets of grave goods. Warriors might be accompanied only by a sword and other personal gear, while a mounted warrior might also have been provided with his horse’s tackle. The highest social level was probably that represented by vehicle burials, which in this period were restricted to a zone stretching from the Middle Rhine to Bohemia (Map 5). The vehicles involved were four-wheeled and comparatively heavy, as would befit a ceremonial or funerary cart. Their spoked wheels, strengthened by iron tyres shrunk on and nailed to the composite wooden felloes, represent a high level of technical achievement. In some burials, like the Bohemian graves of HradenÃn and Lovosice, wooden yokes studded with decorative bronze nails survive.



5.2 Reconstruction of the way in which horse trappings of the seventh and sixth centuries BC were probably arranged, based on evidence from graves in southern Germany.

The long slashing sword suitable as a cavalry weapon, horses, ceremonial vehicles, the rite of inhumation, and the widespread use of iron for weapons mark a distinct break with traditional Urnfield culture. None of these characteristics (except for abundant iron (Map 2)) was entirely unknown earlier, but taken together they demonstrate a significant change. The elite was now attempting to distinguish itself by employing exotic modes of burial adopted from beyond their homeland. The horses and the style of trappings are essentially eastern in origin. The inspiration for the vehicle is more difficult to determine. Vehicle burial was widespread among Pontic communities, but the technology of the Hallstatt carts with their spoked wheels and composite felloes is more likely to have been transmitted from the east via the Mediterranean. Similar vehicle burials have been discovered at Salamis in Cyprus dating to the late seventh century BC and one likely possibility is that knowledge of the technology spread via Etruria to the Transalpine communities. A similar route is possible for the introduction of iron technology, though iron trinkets are also known in the early Pontic-style graves of the Great Hungarian Plain.

Perhaps a simpler way to view the emergence of the Hallstatt C aristocracy to archaeological visibility is to see it as an elite eagerly absorbing cultural influences from the east via the mid-Danube, from the south through the east Alpine passes, and from the Atlantic zone to the west, and adapting the ideas and technologies from these areas to its own social needs. It was a time of energy and innovation. The fine iron sword and the iron-tyred wheels can reasonably be regarded as Hallstatt C developments of some originality. This readiness to adopt new exotic ideas as a means of displaying elite status was to intensify still further in the sixth and early fifth centuries as contact with the Mediterranean systems developed.

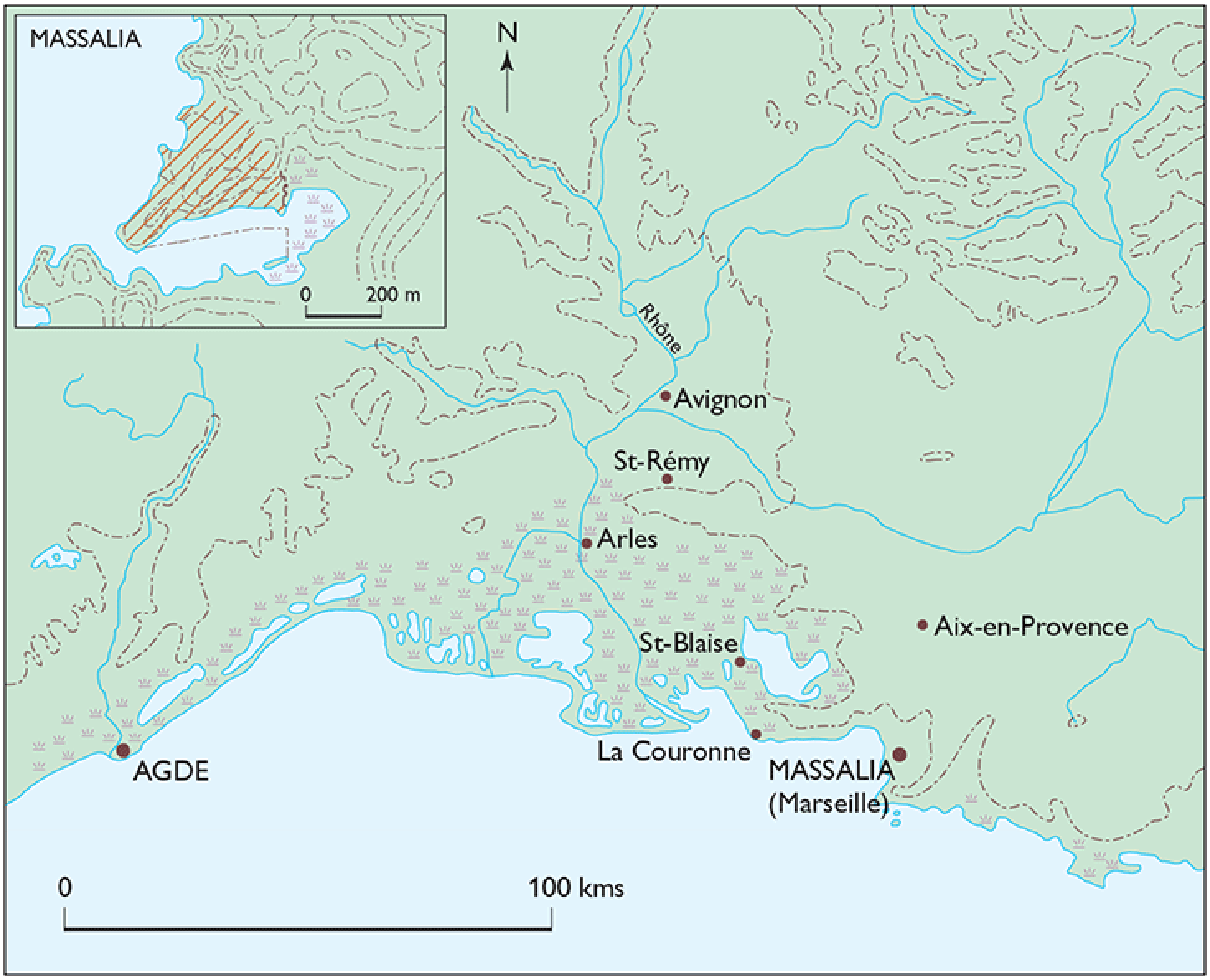
The Western Mediterranean: 650–450 BC

Greek and Phoenician interest in the trading potential of the western Mediterranean was well under way by the seventh century BC as spheres of commercial activity began to crystallize. At this stage Etruria seems to have played a leading role in the transhipment of goods around the northern part of the west Mediterranean and some way down the coast of Italy, but in the second half of the seventh century eastern Greeks from the coasts of Asia Minor began to explore more widely. One of these adventurers, Kolaios of Samos, is reputed to have travelled to Tartessos about 630 BC, finding the market ‘untouched’—untouched, that is, by Greeks. That he was said by Herodotus to have been sailing south for Africa when he was blown off course is not particularly convincing but may hide a different reality. At the trading station of Naukratis in the Nile delta, where eastern Greeks as well as Phoenicians regularly met, the Samians may well have learned of the lucrative Phoenician contacts with Tartessos and decided to explore for themselves.

Soon to follow were the Phokaians from the Aeolian coast. According to Herodotus, they set sail in their *pentekonters* (warships), exploring the

Adriatic region, Etruria, Iberia, and Tartessos, where they established friendly relations with the Tartessian king. Their route almost certainly took them along the north shores of the western Mediterranean. Here they would have become aware of the Etruscan entrepôts along the littoral of Provence and Languedoc, possibly extending to the port of Rhode (Rosas near Gerona) in north-west Spain, which may have been established as early as the eighth century. Years of seasonal sailing in these waters would have familiarized them with the best harbours and landfalls, and in *c.*600 BC the first Phokaian colony was founded at Massalia (Marseilles). Others followed: Emporion and Agde in the fifth century and Tauroention, Olbia, and Nice in the fourth. In this way the Greek presence began to impose itself within the traditional preserve of the Etruscan cities.

The attractions of Massalia were many. Not only was it an excellent well-protected anchorage in the heart of a comparatively productive territory, but it also lay close to the mouth of the Rhône, which provided access into the barbarian hinterland, from where a variety of commodities could be obtained. More significant, at least in the first decades of the colony's existence, was its convenient location in the centre of the long coastal route linking the productive Spanish Levante with Etruria and Magna Graecia. The quantity of Etruscan pottery found in early deposits in the city is an impressive indication of the importance of Etruscan-dominated exchanges at this time (Map 8).


MASSALIA
0
200 m
N
Rhône
Avignon
St-Rémy
Arles
Aix-en-Provence
St-Blaise
La Couronne
MASSALIA
(Marseille)
AGDE
0
100 kms

5.3 The Greek port of Massalia (Marseilles) was founded on the southern coast of Gaul about 600 BC by colonists from Phokaia. An easily defended promontory was chosen, overlooking a large almost land-locked harbour. Massalia was well sited to control trade along the Rhône: it lay conveniently close to the Rhône mouth but clear of the marshy delta.

Before looking at the impact of the colonization on the Hallstatt communities of the hinterland, we must continue to consider in outline the history of the western Mediterranean in so far as it is likely to have had an impact on temperate Europe.

Towards the middle of the sixth century BC major political events in the east were to send shock waves throughout the west Mediterranean. In 574 BC the great trading cities of Phoenicia were overrun and incorporated into the expanding Babylonian empire. The effect was to sever long-established links between the mother cities of Tyre and Sidon and their overseas trading systems. Henceforth, with the umbilical cord cut, Carthage became the leading power in the Phoenician, now Punic, west Mediterranean. A few years later, in 545, Persia expanded its influence westwards to the Aegean, absorbing into its state system the eastern Greek cities of the coastal zone. The opposition of the Greek states encouraged the Persians to undertake a further westward advance to the Greek mainland, but, at Salamis in 480 and Plataea in 479, the Persian forces were soundly beaten.

Many of the eastern Greek cities accepted Persian sovereignty, but the Phokaians, agreeing that subservience was intolerable, decided to migrate en masse to the west Mediterranean to build upon their maritime enterprises already well rooted in the colony at Massalia. The site chosen for the migrant population to settle was Alalia on the eastern coast of Corsica. Such a move was perceived by the Etruscans to be a direct threat to Etruscan trading enterprises, and the opposition, led by the city of Caere, amassed a fleet of sixty Etruscan and sixty Carthaginian vessels to oppose the Phokaians. The ensuing battle in the Sardinian Sea, probably in the strait between Sardinia and Corsica, was a Phokaian victory, but such was the cost that the Phokaians decided to abandon Alalia, eventually founding their colony on the Italian mainland at Velia in the territory of Poseidonia.

The battle of the Sardinian Sea, which took place about 540 BC, was a major event in west Mediterranean history in that it significantly changed the political geography of the region, isolating Massalia and throwing her far more on her own resources. This led to the establishment of further colonies along the southern French coast.

The greatly strengthened Etruscan–Carthaginian coalition now began to pose a serious threat to the commercial interests of the Greek cities of Magna Graecia. The establishment at the Etruscan port of Pyrgi of a place sacred to the Phoenician goddess Astarte by the king of Caere (recorded on gold plaques in a bilingual text) is an indication of the close relations which existed between Carthage and Etruria, a point further emphasized by large volumes of Etruscan goods found at Carthage.

However, the growing power of Magna Graecia began to tell. An Etruscan expedition against the Greek enclave at Cumae in 525 BC failed, thus preventing Etruscan expansion southwards. The pressure continued, but fifty years later the destruction of an Etruscan fleet off Cumae in 474 marked the end of Etruscan expansionist policies in the south.

Increasing pressure on the Etruscan thalassocracy in the Tyrrhenian Sea throughout the sixth century was a significant factor in the landward expansion of Etruscan interests northwards through the Apennines into the southern reaches of the Po valley. New cities like Marzabotto and Felsina (Bologna) were established on the major routes, and there was a significant Etruscan involvement in the development of the two Adriatic ports of Spina and Adria. By the middle of the fifth century the northern frontier of Etruscan settlement had extended to the north bank of the Po and the ports were providing outlets of growing importance to the Adriatic shipping lanes. In parallel, Etruscan influence in the Tyrrhenian Sea declined. The Syracusan-led offensive against coastal Etruria in 454 and 453, though inconclusive, was symptomatic of the pressures besetting the once-flourishing maritime cities.

The developing Etruscan interests in the Po valley in the century *c.*550–450 BC brought them into increasingly close contact with native communities occupying the territory from the Po to the Alps, where two archaeologically defined cultures can be identified (Map 17): the Este culture in the east, occupying a broad zone from the sea to Lake Garda in the valley of the Adige, and the Golasecca culture, the main focus of which lay around lakes Como, Lugano, and Maggiore. Both groups were deeply rooted in the indigenous cultures of the Late Bronze Age and, by virtue of their geographical location, dominated the routes through the Alps which linked the Etruscan south with the Hallstatt north. The development of an urban agglomeration at Como in the fifth century, extending to some 150 hectares, must, in part at least, be due to the intensity of commercial activity and the model of urbanism derived from the Etruscan zone. As we will see, the Golasecca culture formed a significant bridge between the Mediterranean states and the changing Hallstatt world.

The Hallstatt World: 800–450 BC

In order to discuss the rapidly developing social, economic, and political systems of the west central Hallstatt zone in this crucial period it is necessary to introduce the chronological framework that will be adopted.

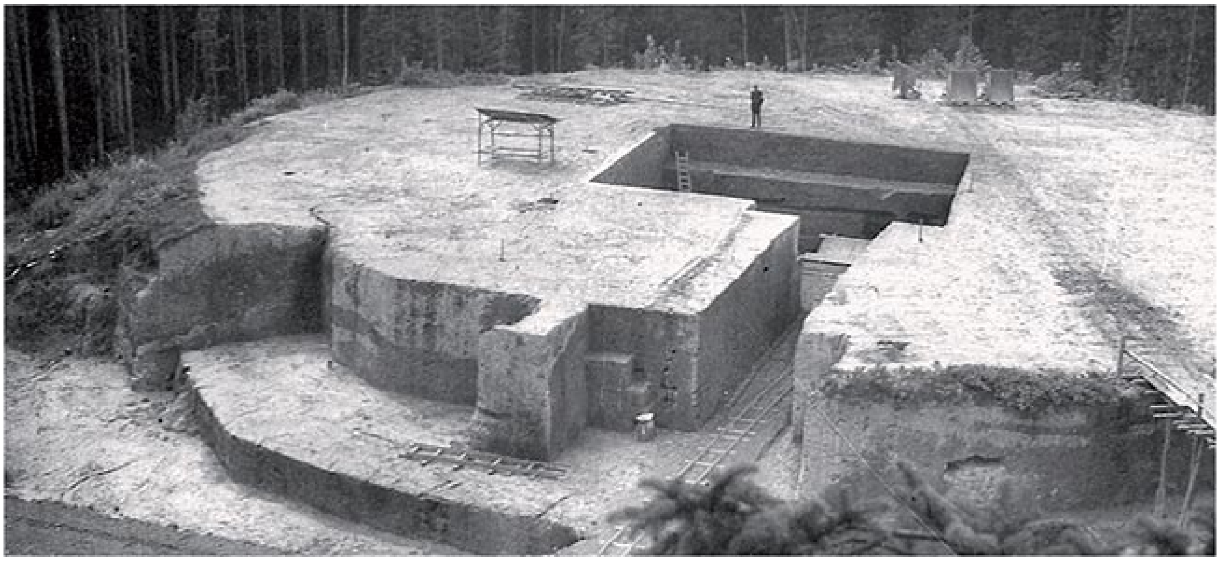
A great deal has been written on the subject and there are still areas of debate, but the following is now widely accepted as a serviceable scheme:

Hallstatt C	*c*.800–*c*.600
Hallstatt D1	*c*.600–*c*.530/520
Hallstatt D2–3	*c*.530/520–*c*.450/440
La Tène A	*c*.450/440–*c*.370/350

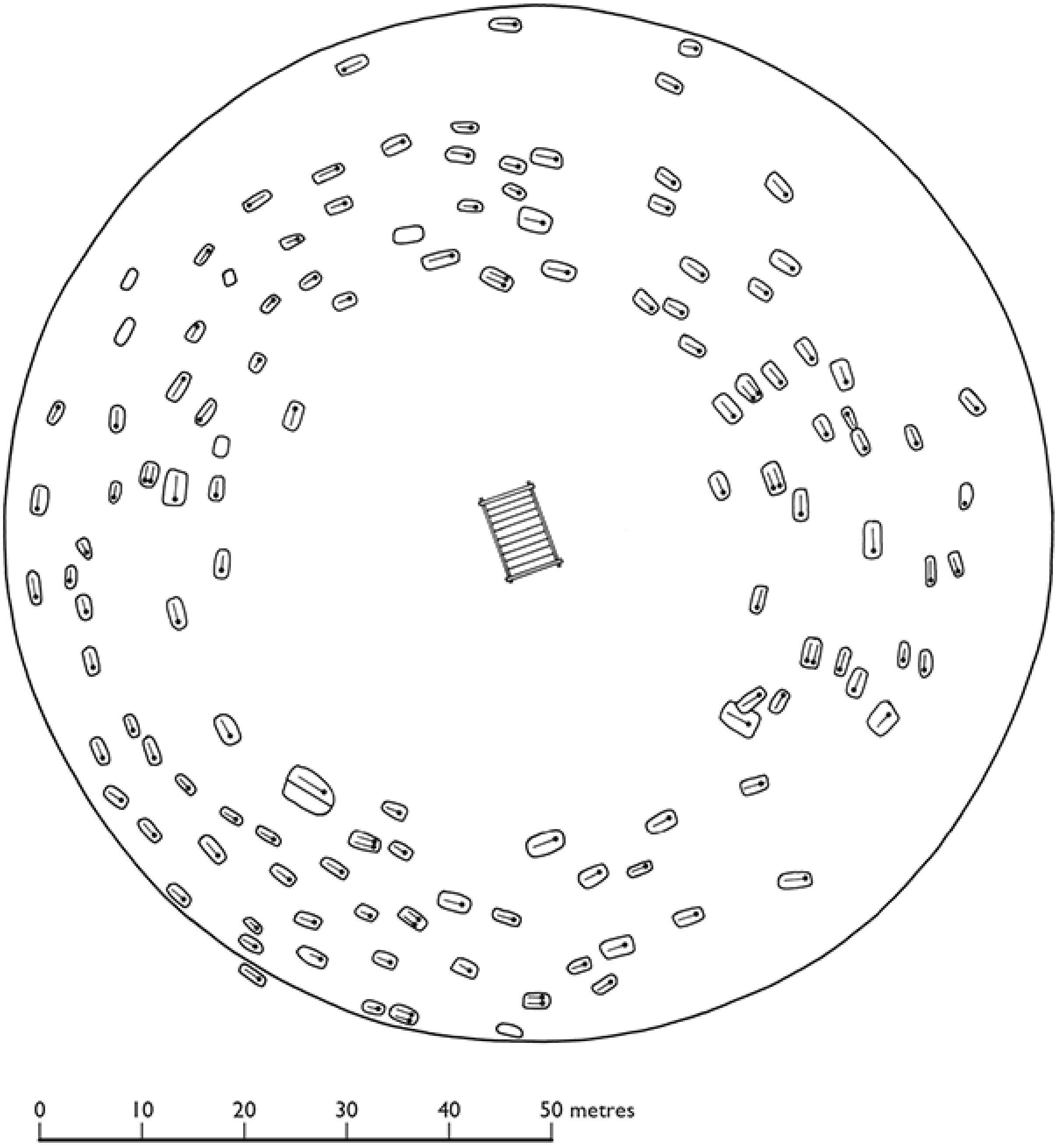
The scheme usefully correlates with the principal events in western Mediterranean history, with Hallstatt D1 beginning at the time of the foundation of Massalia and the beginning of Hallstatt D2–3 coinciding with the turmoil following the battle of the Sardinian Sea and running parallel with a major phase of Etruscan expansion northwards.

We have already seen (above, pp. 99–102) how in the Hallstatt C period the zone of elite burials, represented by wagons and horse gear, or harness and yokes without wagons, extended in a broad, and discontinuous, zone from Bohemia to southern Germany, apart from rare exceptions seldom spreading west of the Rhine (Map 5). At this time the principal concentration lay in southern Germany (Baden-Württemberg and Bavaria), where more than ninety elite burials have been identified. In addition to vehicle- and horse-related accoutrements, an elite lifestyle was frequently represented by pottery and bronze vessels of various kinds related to the feasting that accompanied the dead to the grave. Elite burials continued to be found in southern Germany during Hallstatt D1, but no longer appear in Bohemia. Some of them, like the barrow burials of Hohmichele near Heuneburg and Magdalenenberg near Villingen, were colossal structures requiring much effort in the interests of monumentalizing the lineage of the dead aristocrats, and the silk used to embroider the dress of the woman buried at Hohmichele indicates the ability of the elite to acquire rare trade goods.

To what extent the foundation of Massalia about 600 BC influenced the growing power of the West Hallstatt chieftains is difficult to say. Certainly some exotic products, such as the hydria found at GrÃ¤chwil, ‘Rhodian’ flagons (Map 9), and bead-edged bronze basins from Magna Graecia, were becoming available as grave goods, and these may well have been transported via Massalia and the Rhône corridor to add a touch of the exotic to the Hallstatt feast enhanced by Massiliot wine (Map 10).



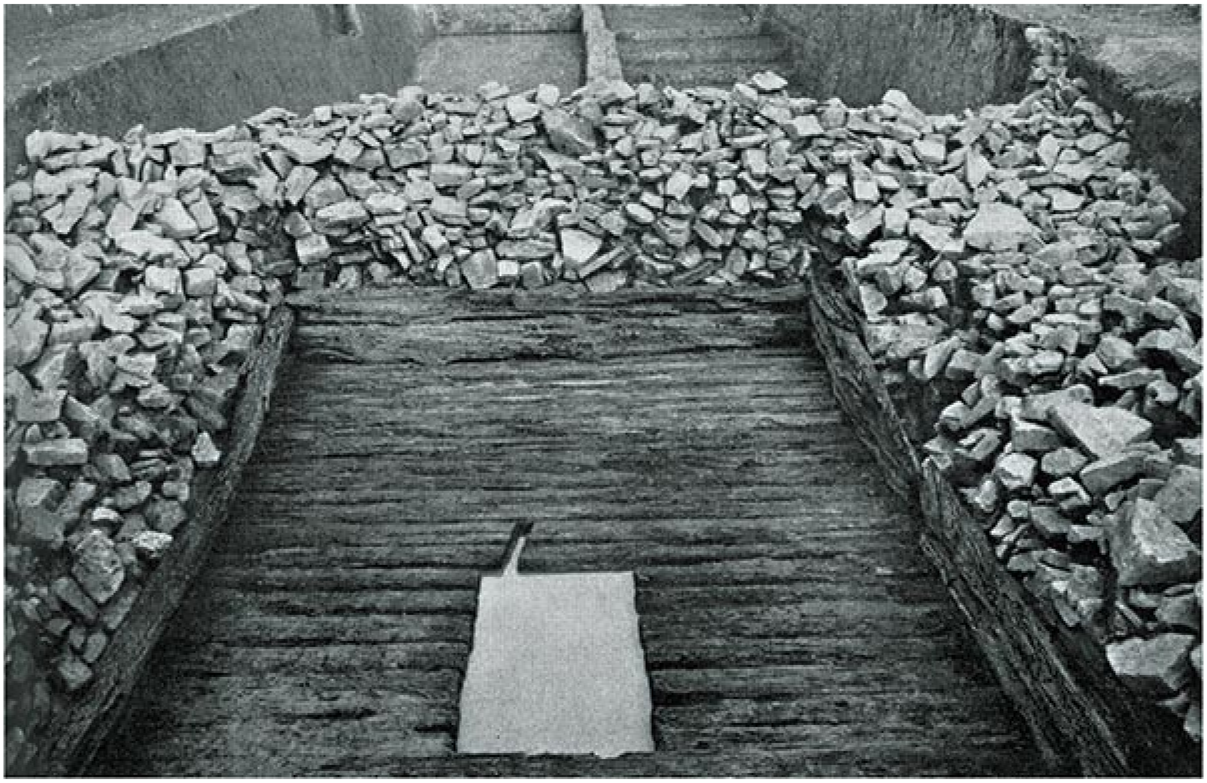
5.4 The burial mound of Hohmichele, near Heuneburg, dating to the late sixth century BC, is shown here under excavation in 1937–8. The style of digging, in arbitrary horizontal spits rather than stratigraphically, was typical of German excavations at the time.



5.5 The great burial mound of Magdalenenberg bei Villingen, Schwarzwald-Baar-Kreis, Germany, contained a central burial in a log-built chamber dating to the mid-sixth century BC. A number of other burials were inserted into the mound over the next two centuries.

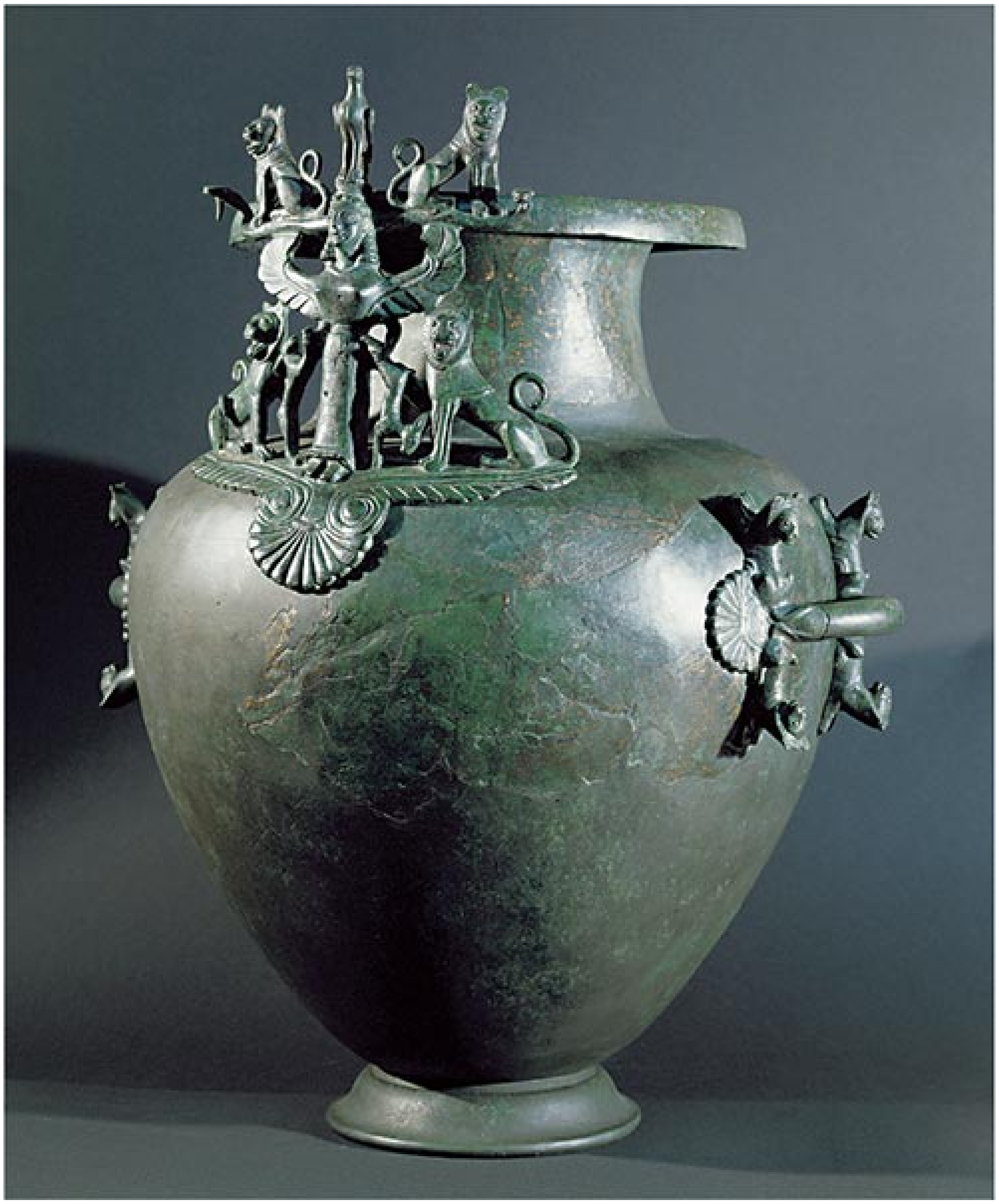
That Greek ideas were being readily accepted is vividly demonstrated by the hillfort of Heuneburg built on a plateau overlooking the Danube. The earliest Hallstatt rampart was constructed in the middle of the seventh century, and the site continued in use for some 200 years. During Hallstatt

D1 the defences of the plateau enclosure were completely remodelled in a style unique in Transalpine Europe: stone wall footings were laid with hollow, forward-projecting bastions regularly spaced along its west side. Above the foundations the wall was built of carefully squared mud-bricks of regular size and shape. This alien structure, so clearly the concept of a Greek mind, and presumably overseen by a Greek architect, is a striking example of the willingness (and ability) of the local Hallstatt elite to adopt totally foreign modes of expression in the interests of displaying status and power. The defended site on the plateau overlooked a lower town built around it to the west and north. It was tightly packed with buildings and was defended by a five-metre-high rampart fronted by a massive ditch. Access was through a monumental gate built of mud-bricks on stone foundations reached by a bridge first constructed around 590 BC. Beyond the lower town were concentrated a number of farmsteads, perhaps as many as fifty, each set in a palisaded enclosure. In all, the early sixth-century settlement extended over about 100 hectares and probably housed about 5,000 people.

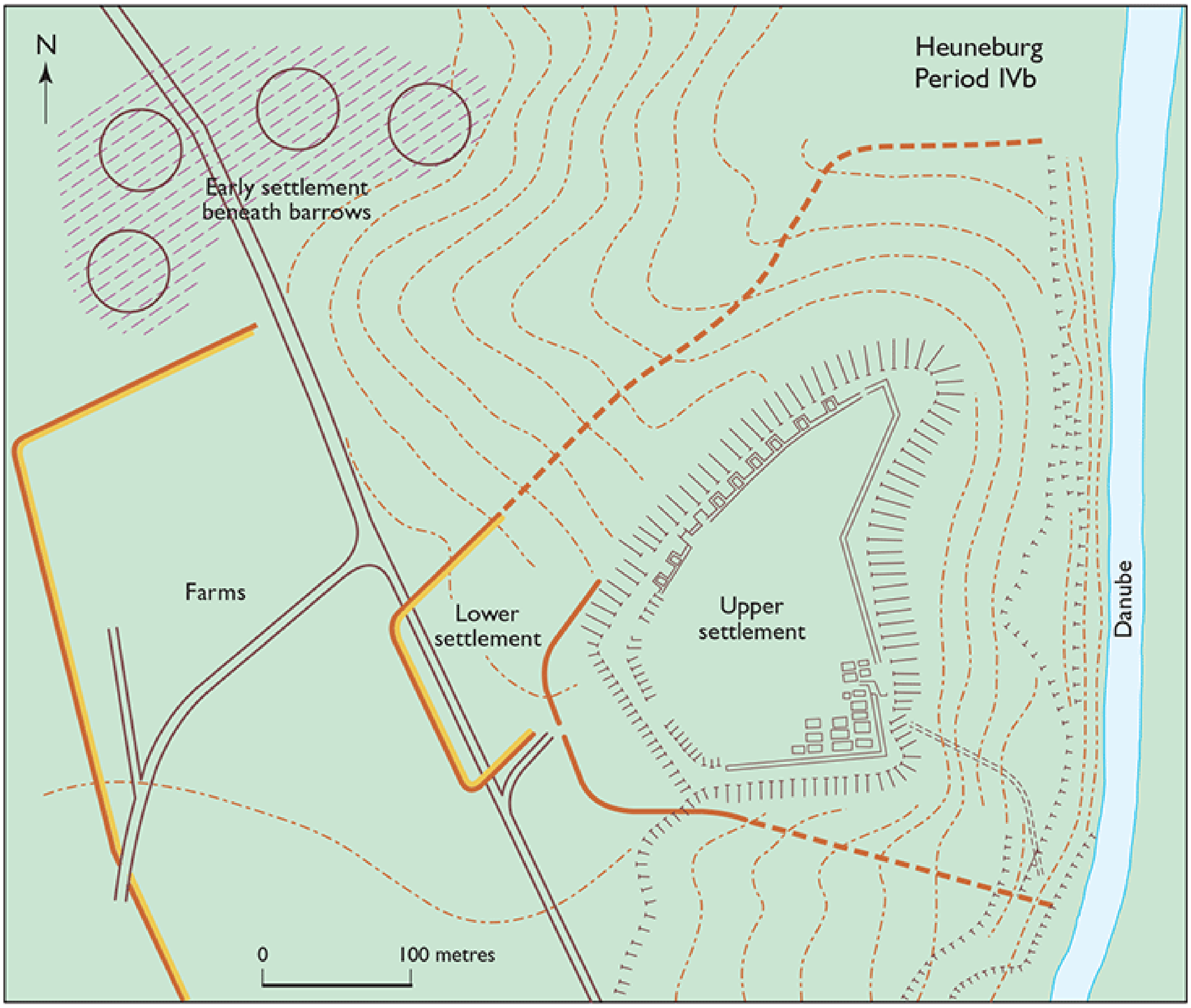


5.6 The barrow of Magdalenenberg, in Germany, covered a well-preserved timber chamber protected beneath a cairn of stones.

That the colony of Massalia was now contributing to the aristocratic culture of the West Hallstatt zone is clear, but the intensity or duration of this contribution is not. All that can safely be said is that there is no evidence to suggest that, at this stage, the Rhône corridor saw a massive movement of goods and commodities. Massalia was still part of an extensive Mediterranean network and there would have been little impetus actively to seek markets in the hinterland.



5.7 This Greek bronze hydria, found in a burial at GrÃ¤chwil, Switzerland, was imported from the Mediterranean in the sixth century BC. It may have been a diplomatic gift to a local chieftain. Historisches Museum, Berne.

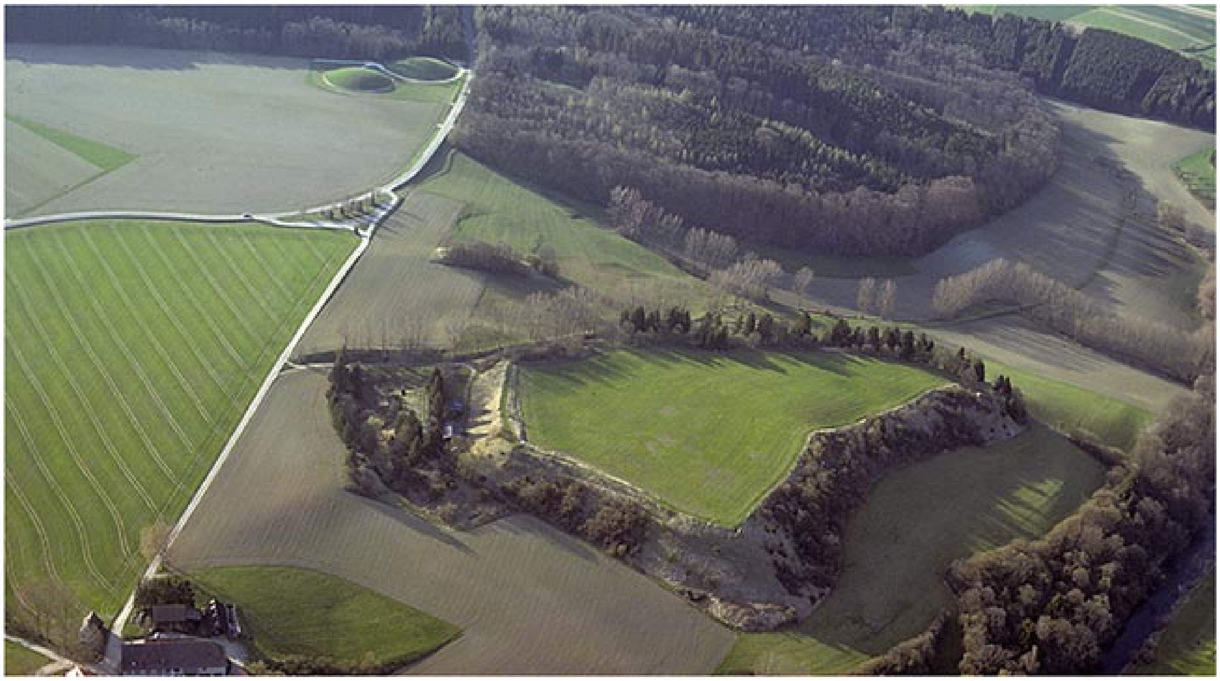

N
Heuneburg
Period IVb
Early settlement
beneath barrows
Farms
Lower
settlement
Upper
settlement
Danube
0
100 metres

5.8 The hilltop settlement of Heuneburg, Baden-Württemberg, Germany, showing the situation in the late sixth century BC (Period IVb), when the walls were built in Greek style with mud-bricks on a stone-rubble foundation. The barrows nearby lie above an earlier phase of settlement.

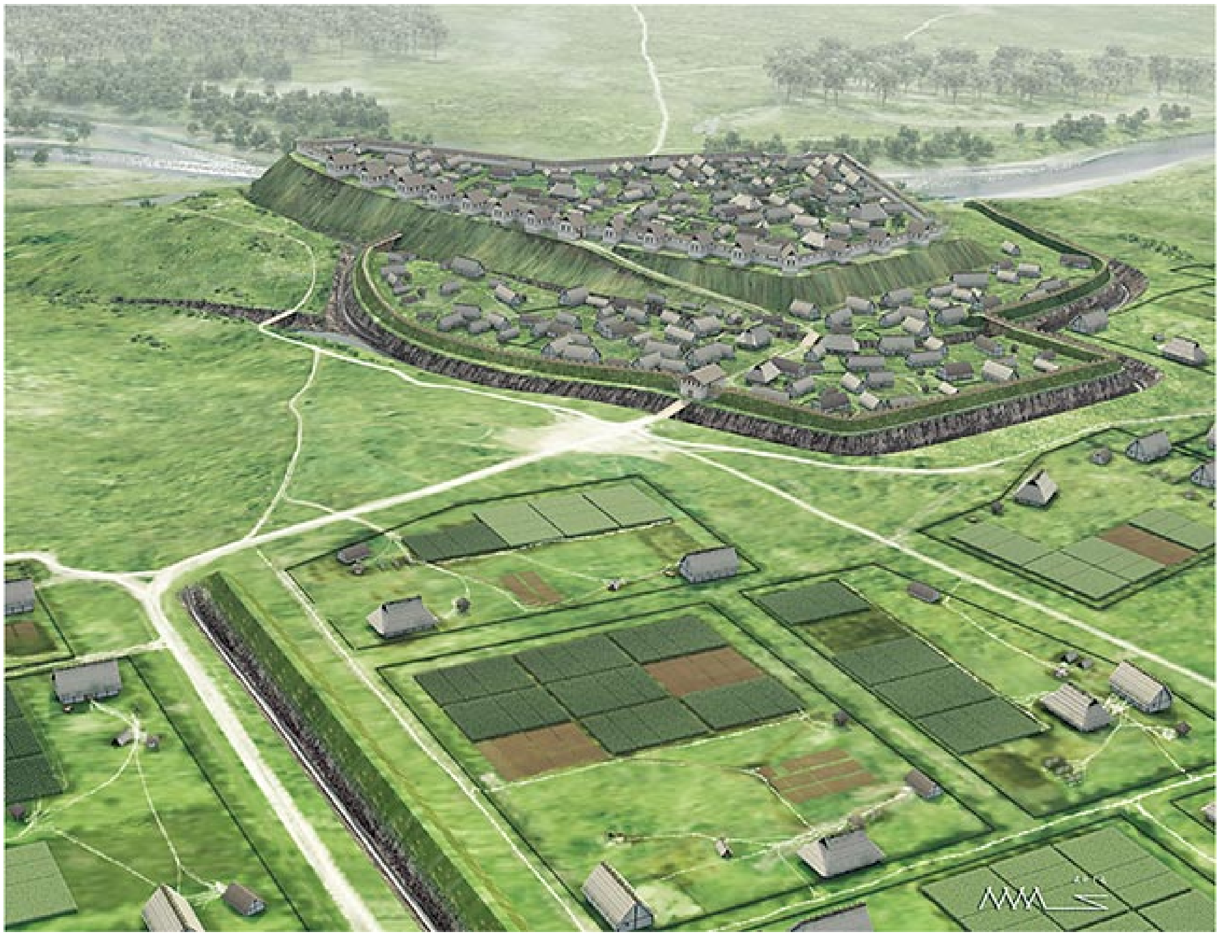
A major change came about at the beginning of Hallstatt D2–3, that is, about 530–520 BC. In the West Hallstatt zone this can best be characterized as a concentration of power in fewer centres. The phenomenon can be recognized in two ways: by the increasing exclusivity of the elite burial rite and by the abandonment of a number of hillforts, leaving fewer sites to develop as strong central foci. In southern Germany, for example, the core of aristocratic power, the number of known burials with wagons or harness decreases from forty-six to twenty, and in some areas of the

Swabian Alps elite burials disappear altogether after the end of Hallstatt D1. In the region of Breisgau, of the twelve hillforts occupied in Hallstatt D1, only one continued in use in the subsequent period.

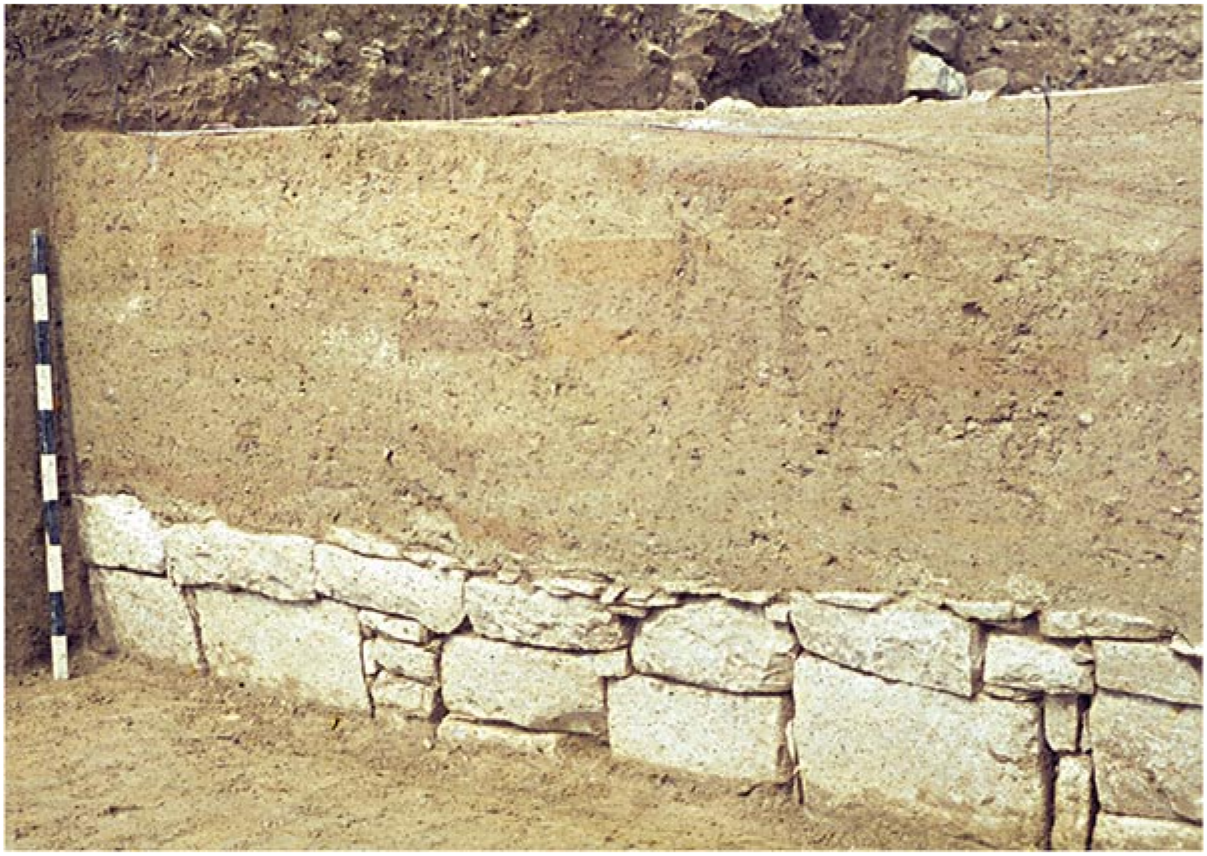
The archaeological data implies a rapid social change, but one which would be entirely understandable within the context of indigenous development. In parallel with the emergence of fewer, richer centres of power in the core area of southern Germany, there was a marked expansion of the system westwards from the Rhine into northern and eastern France. A glance at Map 5 will show that the focus of power now occupied a swathe of territory to the north of the Alps linking the river systems of the Loire/Rhône/Saône, Seine, Rhine, and Danube. It could fairly be said that the nexus of west central European communications was now dominated by a single cultural and social system, and the amount of gold found in the burials (Map 15) is an indication of its productive capacity.



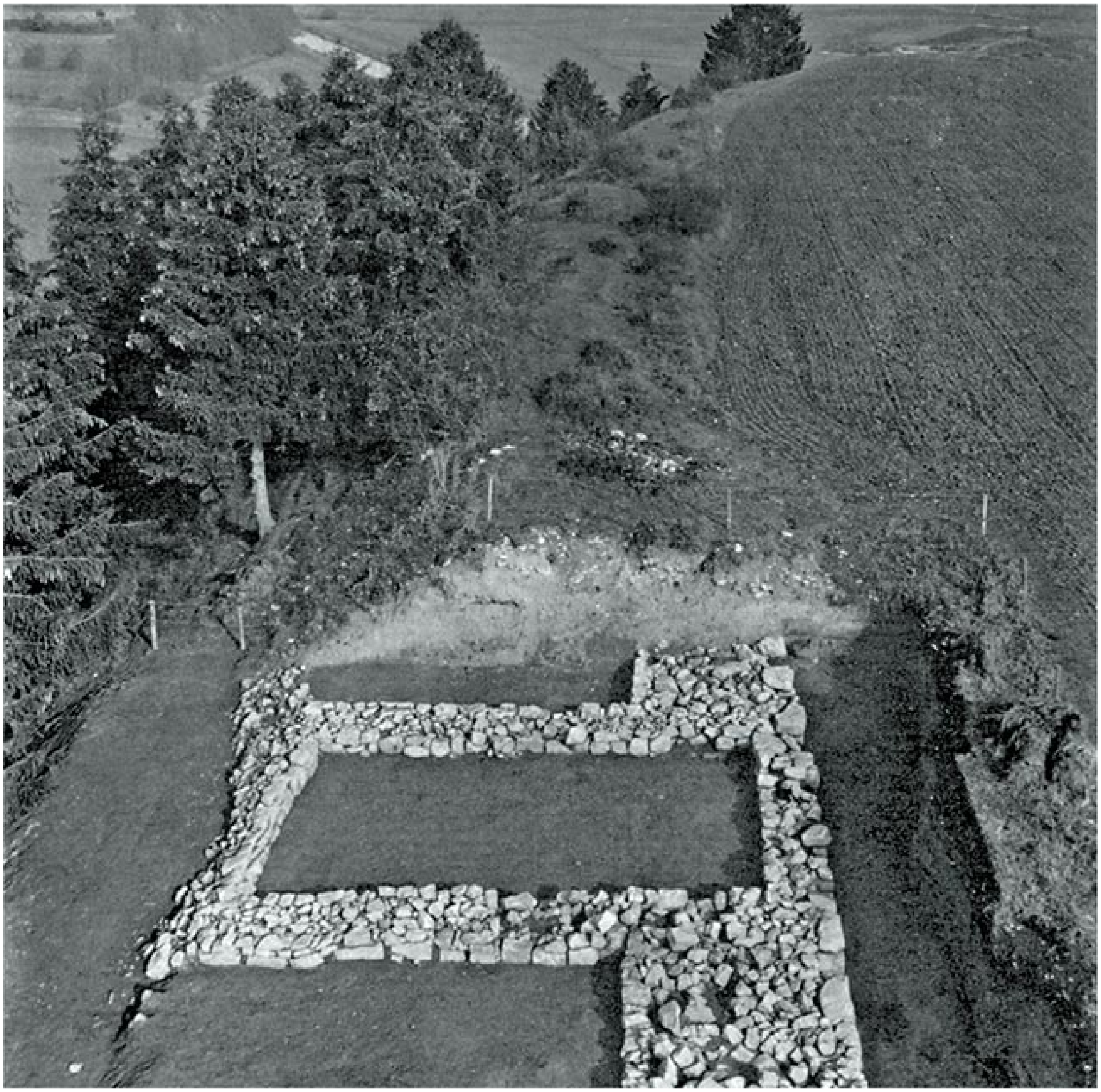
5.9 (*Top*) Aerial view of the hillfort of Heuneburg overlooking the river Danube. The site was used and fortified intermittently from the Late Bronze Age, and in the late sixth century BC became a centre of princely power. The barrows can be seen against the woodland.



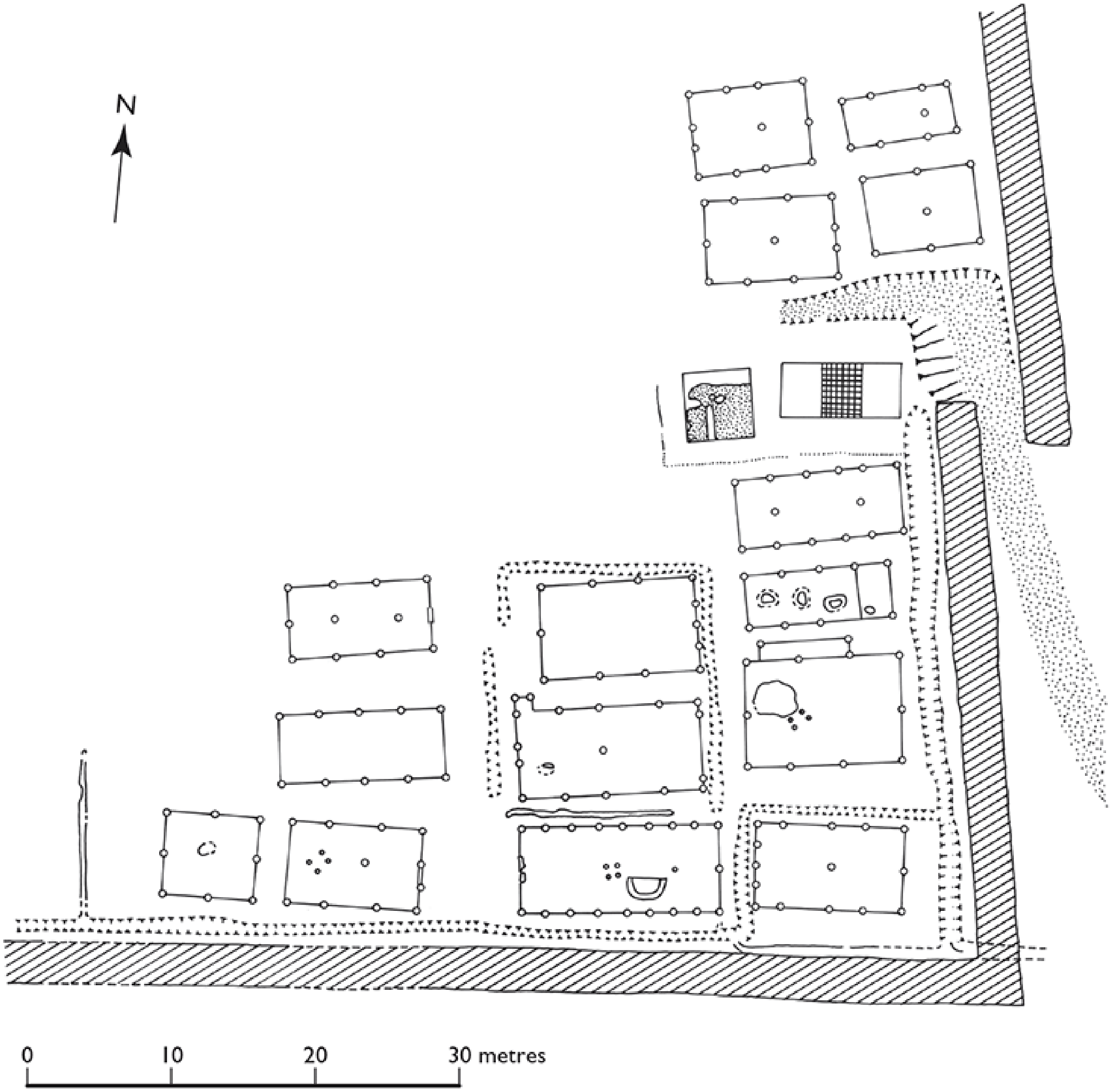
5.10 (*Bottom*) Artist's reconstruction of the settlement of Heuneburg as it may have looked in the late sixth century BC with regularly laid-out farms in the protection of the defended hilltop settlement.



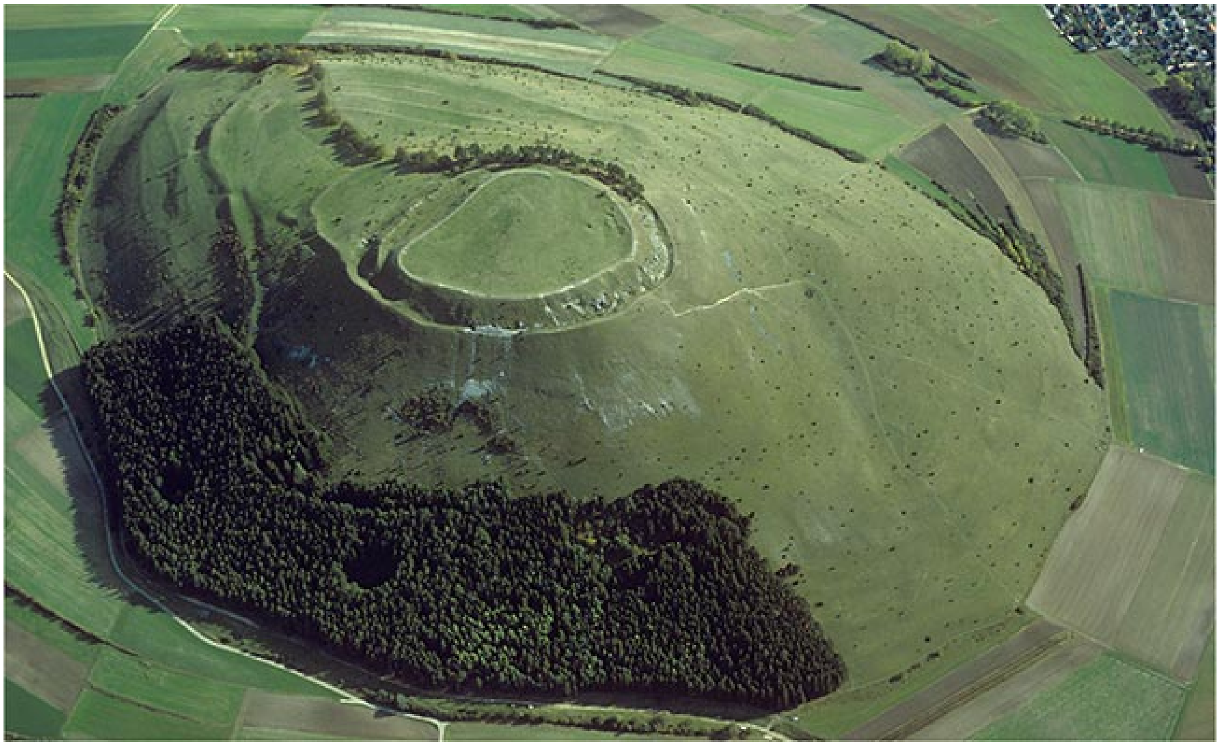
5.11 (*Left*) For one brief period in the late sixth century the defensive wall of Heuneburg was built of mud-brick on a stone foundation in a style closely reminiscent of Greek defensive building. Such a structure deep in barbarian Europe implies the intervention of a Greek architect.



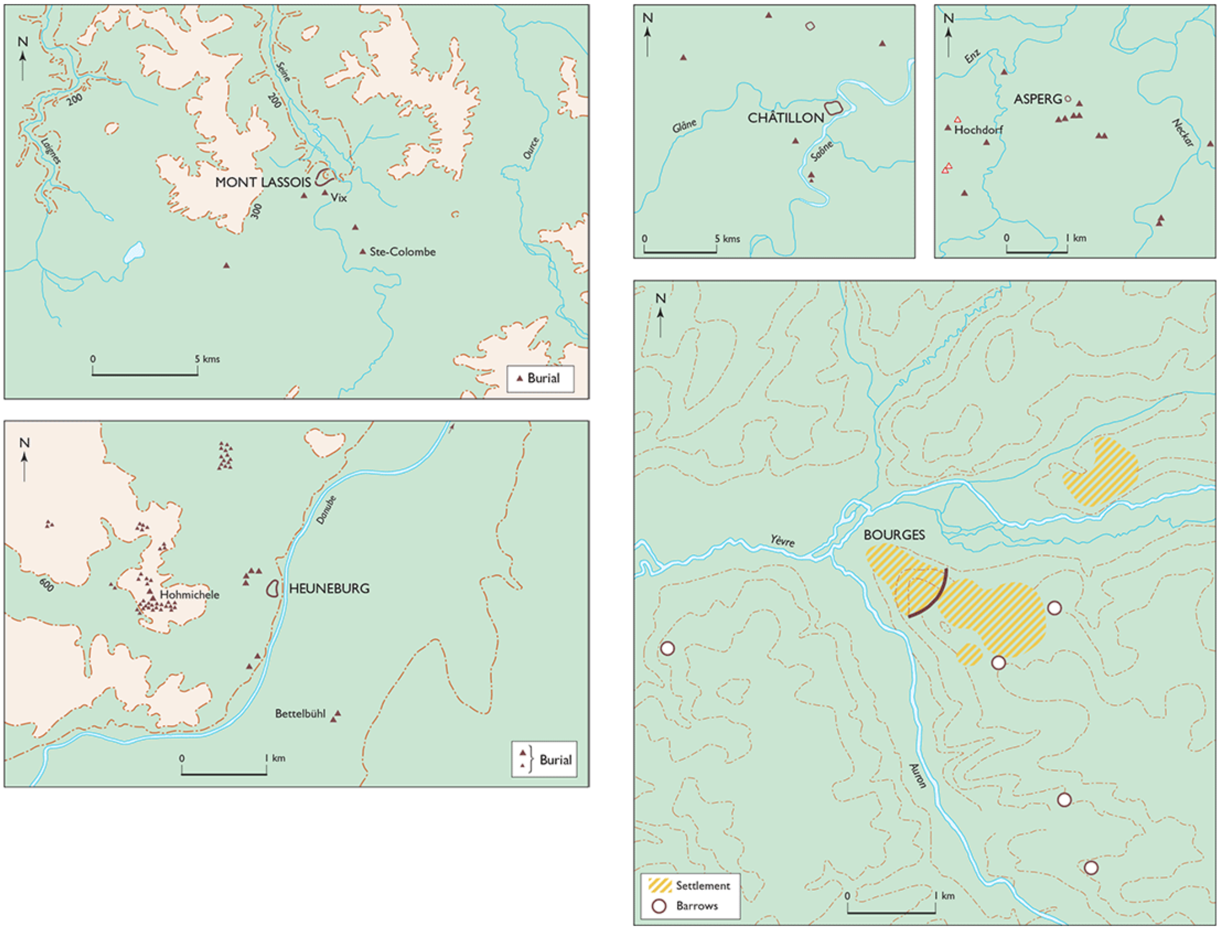
5.12 (*Below*) The north-facing wall of Heuneburg during the phase when it was constructed in Greek style was provided with close-spaced rectangular bastions designed more for grandiose effect than for defensive necessity.



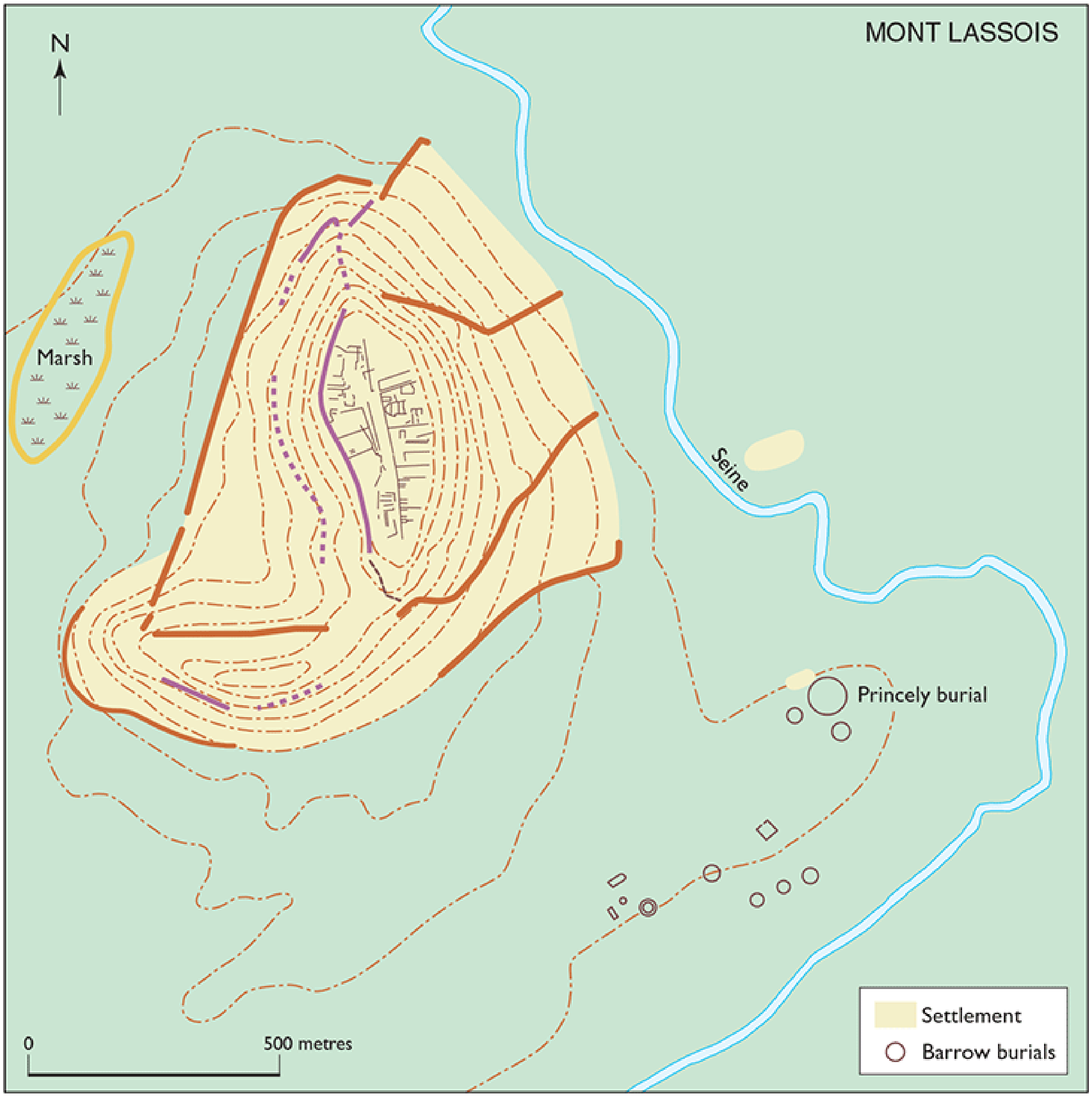
5.13 (*Opposite top*) Excavations inside the south-east corner of Heuneburg. The archaeological stratigraphy was well preserved. Here, a succession of close-spaced timber buildings was recovered dating to the second half of the sixth century BC.



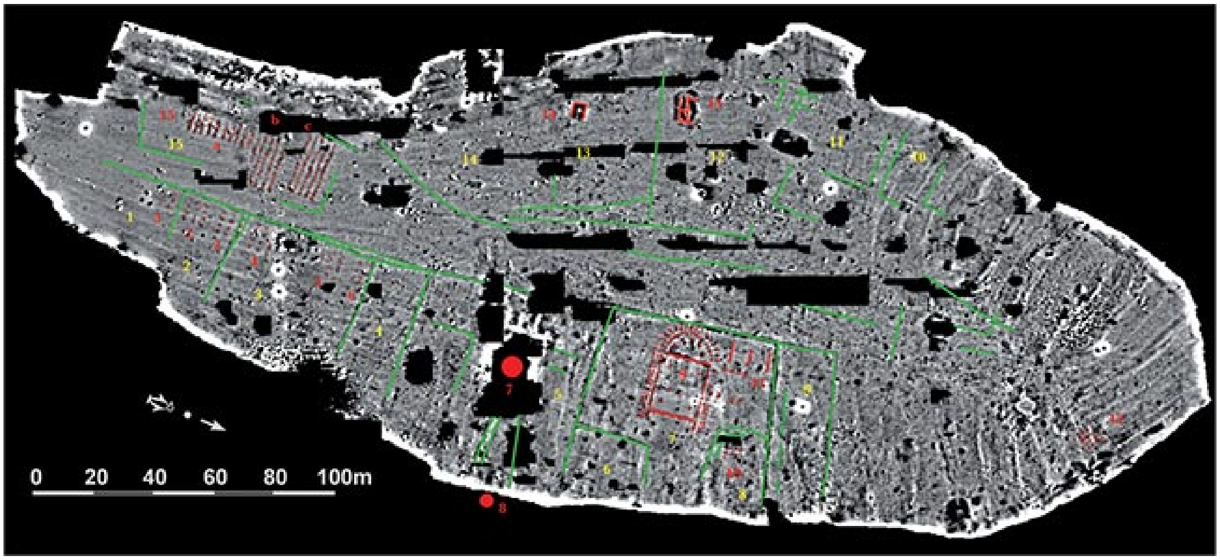
5.14 (*Opposite bottom*) The hillfort of Ipf, Bopfingen, Germany, dominates the surrounding countryside. In all probability it served as a centre of princely power in the late sixth century BC.


N
200
Seine
200
300
Laignes
Ource
MONT LASSOIS
Vix
Ste-Colombe
0
5 kms
Burial
N
CHÂTILLON
Glâne
Saône
0
5 kms
N
Enz
ASPERG
Hochdorf
Neckar
0
1 km
N
600
Danube
Hohmichele
HEUNEBURG
Bettelbühl
0
1 km
Burial
N
Yèvre
BOURGES
Auron
0
1 km
Settlement
Barrows

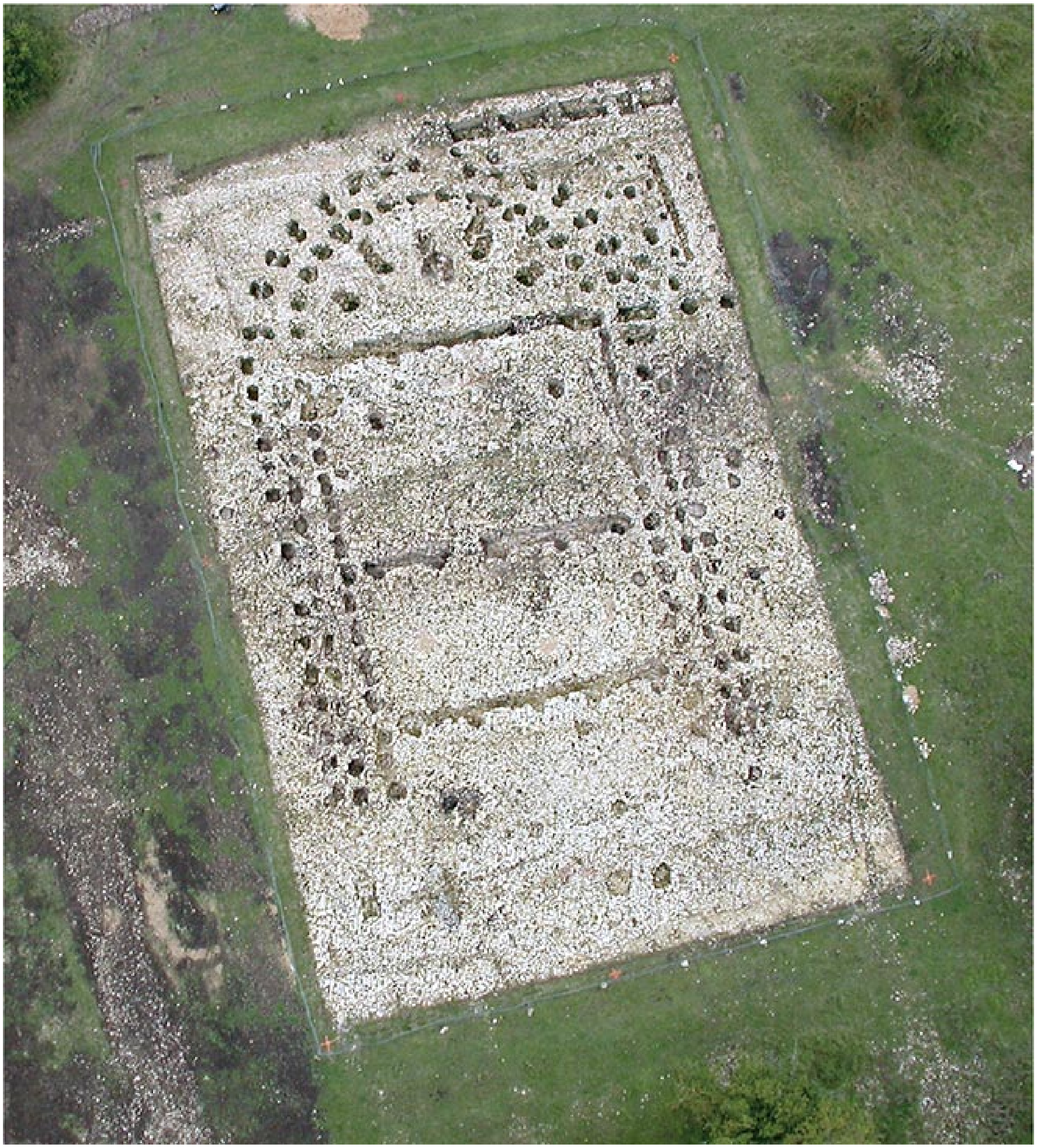
5.15 (*Above and opposite*) The location of five of the 'princely centres' of the late sixth century BC. The focus of each is a fortified hilltop often commanding a major river route. Rich burials cluster nearby.


MONT LASSOIS
N
Marsh
Seine
Princely burial
Settlement
Barrow burials
0
500 metres

5.16 The settlement of Mont Lassois in the late sixth century. The princely burial in the bend of the river is the famous tomb of Vix.



5.17 (*Top*) Geophysical survey of the plateau settlement on Mont Lassois showing the regular organization of the interior. The apsidal house can clearly be seen, as can the two rows of granaries at the southern end of the site (all picked out in red).

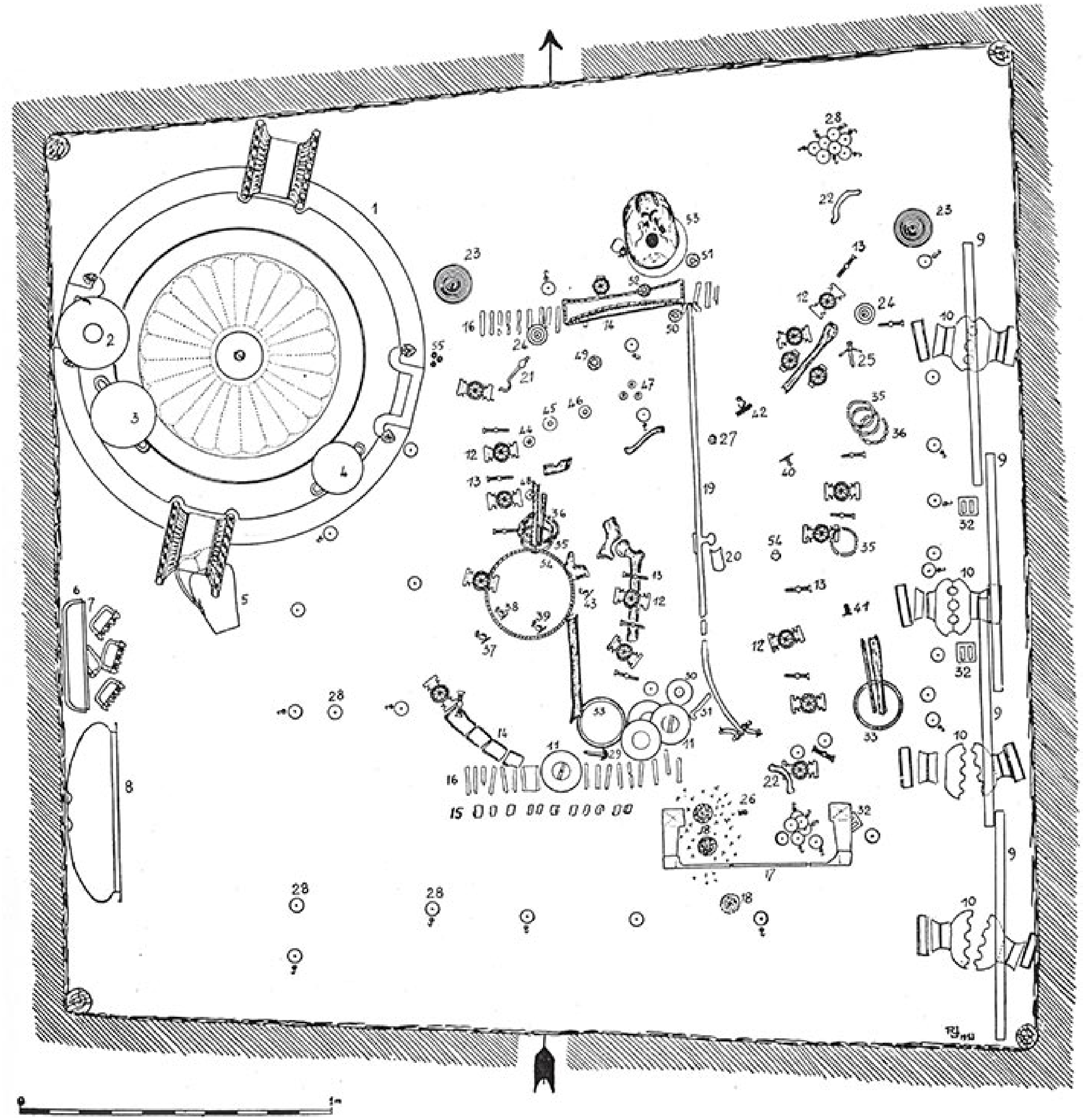


5.18 (*Bottom*) The apsidal house on Mont Lassois after excavation. The several phases of construction can be made out.

The elite systems of Hallstatt D2–3 are characterized by the appearance of comparatively large quantities of Mediterranean imports found in the major hillforts and in the princely burials (Maps 10–12). That the range of goods is limited to wine-drinking equipment appropriate to the Greek *symposion* strongly suggests that it was the *idea* of the *symposion* that was accepted and adopted by the elite, as an extension, no doubt, of their long-established feasting rites. The rich female burial at Vix neatly exemplifies the range of imports with its huge *krater* for wine-mixing, jugs for pouring, basins, and Attic cups for drinking. The discovery of numerous fragments of Attic cups in the nearby hillfort of Mont Lassois is an indication of a princely residence. A geophysical survey has shown that the area within the fortifications was systematically laid out and heavily occupied. One dominant enclosure contained a large timber building with an apsidal end. The scale of the structure and the associated Greek pottery suggests that it may have been a palace.

A similar array of Attic pottery from Heuneburg III, found together with the Massiliot amphorae in which the wine was transported, shows that after the rebuilding which followed the violent destruction of the mud-brick defences of Heuneburg IV about 530/520 BC, contact with the Mediterranean world developed even more strongly. It was about this time that the outer settlement of farmsteads seems to have been largely abandoned and part of the former settlement area was used to create the aristocratic cemetery of GieÃŸhübel-Talhau. The rich chieftain burial of Hochdorf near the hillfort of Hohenasperg also belongs to this period.

While it could reasonably be argued that this late phase of Hallstatt development was little more than an intensification of social trends deeply rooted in the indigenous Urnfield culture of the region, it would be perverse to believe that the economic impetus of the Greek littoral, after the traumas of the 540s–530s BC, had nothing to do with the sudden appearance of Mediterranean luxury goods in the barbarian hinterland. The most satisfactory explanation would be to accept that both societies had needs—the Greeks to develop new trading partners, the Hallstatt elite to find new modes of expression consistent with their aristocratic systems. For a brief period, *c*.530–450/440, these needs coincided and the Rhône corridor provided the principal axis of communication between the two zones. How the exchanges were articulated is uncertain, but the identification of a major trading centre dating to this crucial period at Bragny-sur-Saône, close to the confluence of the Saône, Doubs, and Dheune, is of considerable interest. Here, in the earliest phase (late sixth and early fifth century), Massiliot amphorae and other Mediterranean-produced pottery together with Attic imports and polychrome glass vessels were found in some quantity. Bragny, situated on the interface between the Hallstatt north and the Mediterranean sphere, is very well placed to have been the principal port-of-trade through which exchanges could have been arranged. In the ready accessibility of luxury goods from the south may lie the reason for the westward extension of the Hallstatt elite zone after *c*.530.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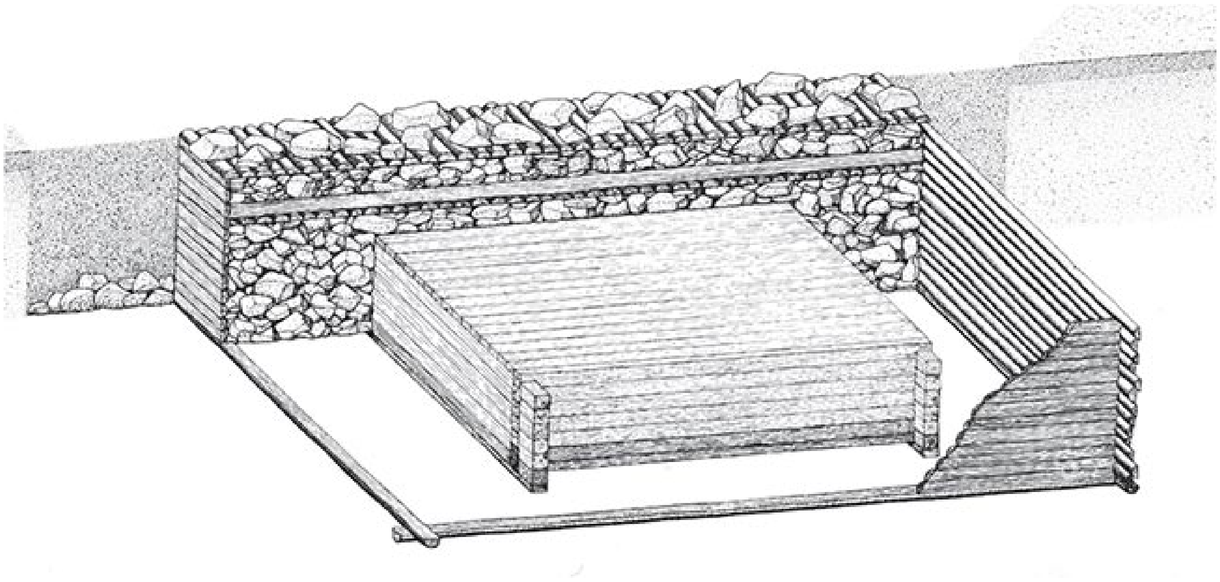
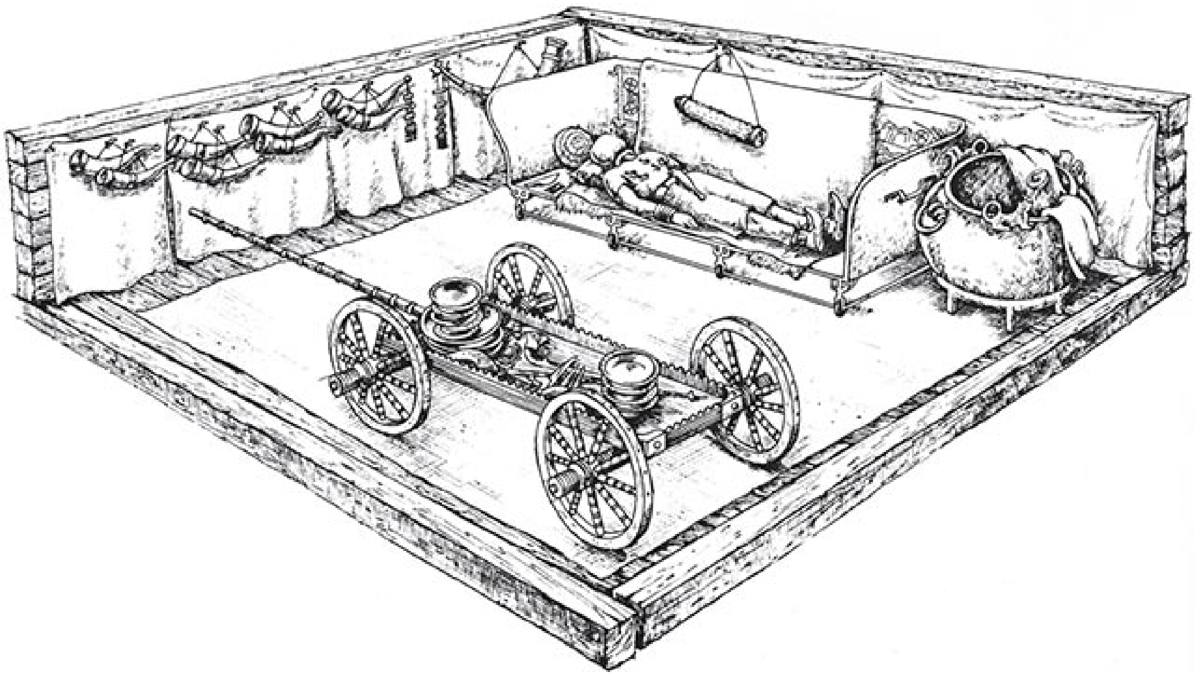
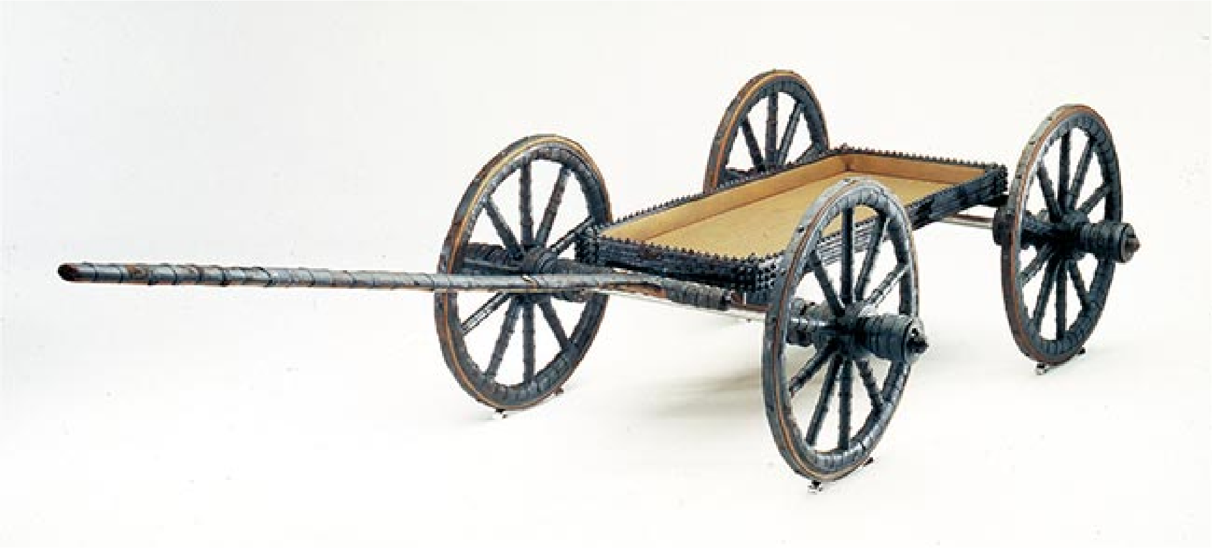
5.19 The princely burial found beneath a substantial barrow at Vix, ChÃ¢tillon-sur-Seine, France, was contained in a wood-lined chamber. The female burial was accompanied by personal ornaments, a set of imported Mediterranean wine-drinking gear, and a dismantled funerary vehicle. The burial dates to the end of the sixth century BC.



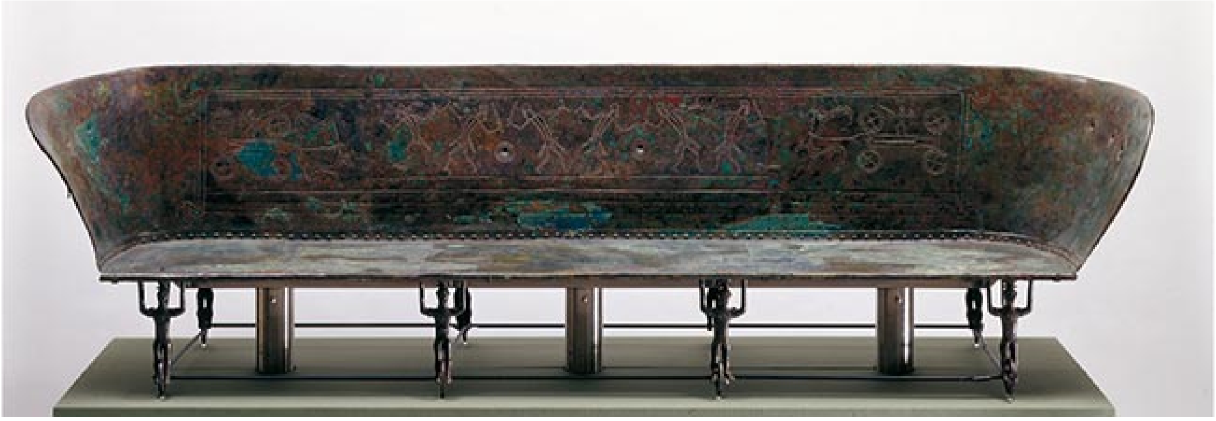
5.20 The princely burial found beneath a substantial barrow at Vix, ChÃ¢tillon-sur-Seine, France, was contained in a wood-lined chamber. The female burial was accompanied by personal ornaments, a set of imported Mediterranean wine-drinking gear, and a dismantled funerary vehicle. The burial dates to the end of the sixth century BC.



5.21 (*Top*) The chieftain’s grave at Hochdorf, Stuttgart, Germany, dates to the second half of the sixth century BC. After the roof had been added, the inner grave chamber was surrounded by stone rubble laced with horizontal timbers to hinder grave-robbing, and buried beneath a large barrow.



5.22 (*Bottom*) Reconstruction of the interior of the timber-built grave chamber of the chieftain’s burial at Hochdorf.



5.23 (*Opposite top*) Funerary wagon from the princely tomb of Hochdorf. The wooden structure was cased in iron sheeting. Landesmuseum Württemberg, Stuttgart.

The rich burials of the Late Hallstatt zone have been characterized as reflecting a prestige goods economy, that is, a socio-economic system in which elite status was maintained by the manipulation of rare and valuable commodities available only to the paramount chieftains (Map 16). They would retain their power by making gifts of lesser value to those below them in the social hierarchy in return for goods and services. So long as the supply of exotics was kept up and the paramounts held the monopoly, the system would remain relatively stable. Such a theoretical scheme provides a useful model for understanding Late Hallstatt society. It gains support from the graded status differences which can be recognized in the burial record, and from the evidence for the manufacture of lower-value personal ornaments such as brooches and bracelets, useful in gift exchange, in the princely hillforts of Mont Lassois and Heuneburg.

5.24 (*Opposite centre*) Bronze couch from the burial at Hochdorf upon which the dead chieftain was laid. The castors allowed the couch to be easily moved. The decorative panel on the back illustrates four-wheeled vehicles pulled by paired horses and warriors in single combat: both may be scenes from funerary rituals. Landesmuseum Württemberg, Stuttgart.

So far we have assumed that the Mediterranean wine-drinking gear which was imported into the Hallstatt sphere at this time all came via

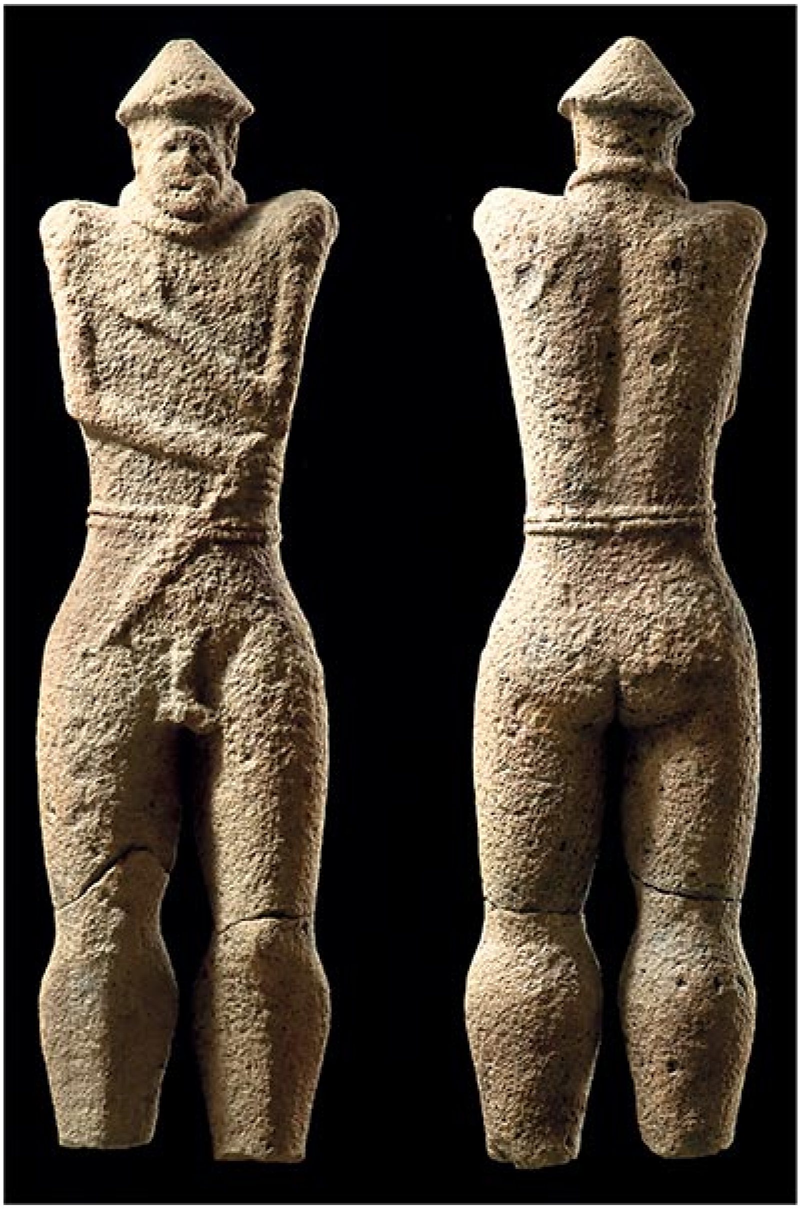
Massalia. This may well be the case, but a significant number of items were of Etruscan manufacture, vessels such as the stamnos from Gurgy, Yonne, the griffon-headed cauldron and tripod from Sainte-Colombe, the beaked flagons and dishes from Vix, and the amphora from Conliège, Jura. The list is impressive, but there is nothing inherently unlikely in supposing that those entrepreneurs seeking to trade with the interior should have put together sets of wine-drinking gear deriving from a variety of sources. The most reasonable explanation for these exotic Etruscan bronzes of the period 540/530–480/470 BC, therefore, is that they were, indeed, channelled through the Greek port of Massalia. This should not, however, be confused with the direct Etruscan trade which developed at the very end of the Hallstatt period, 480/470–450/440, resulting from the consolidation of Etruscan commercial interests in the Po valley. In this development, the Golasecca communities, commanding the Italian lakes and the central and west Alpine passes, served as the middlemen.

Links between the Transalpine communities and the Golasecca culture (Map 17) were long established and are most dramatically exemplified by the four-wheeled funerary wagons of the seventh and sixth centuries BC found at Sesto Calende, on Lake Maggiore, and Ca'Morta, near Como, as well as a number of broadly contemporary sword types which have Transalpine origins or antecedents. A similar pattern of contact continuing into the middle of the fifth century is reflected in the second four-wheeled vehicle from Ca'Morta, which shares a number of structural details with the somewhat earlier vehicle found in the Late Hallstatt burial at Vix. The funerary vehicles at Ca'Morta and Sesto Calende may have been diplomatic gifts from the north but it is equally possible that they were the response of the local Golaseccan elite to alien burial rites. At the very least the vehicles must reflect constant cultural contact over a long period. These long-established systems of communication and exchange facilitated Etruscan trade in the period after *c.*480/470. It is in this period that the settlement at Como developed rapidly into an extensive proto-urban agglomeration, probably as a direct response to an intensification in commerce.

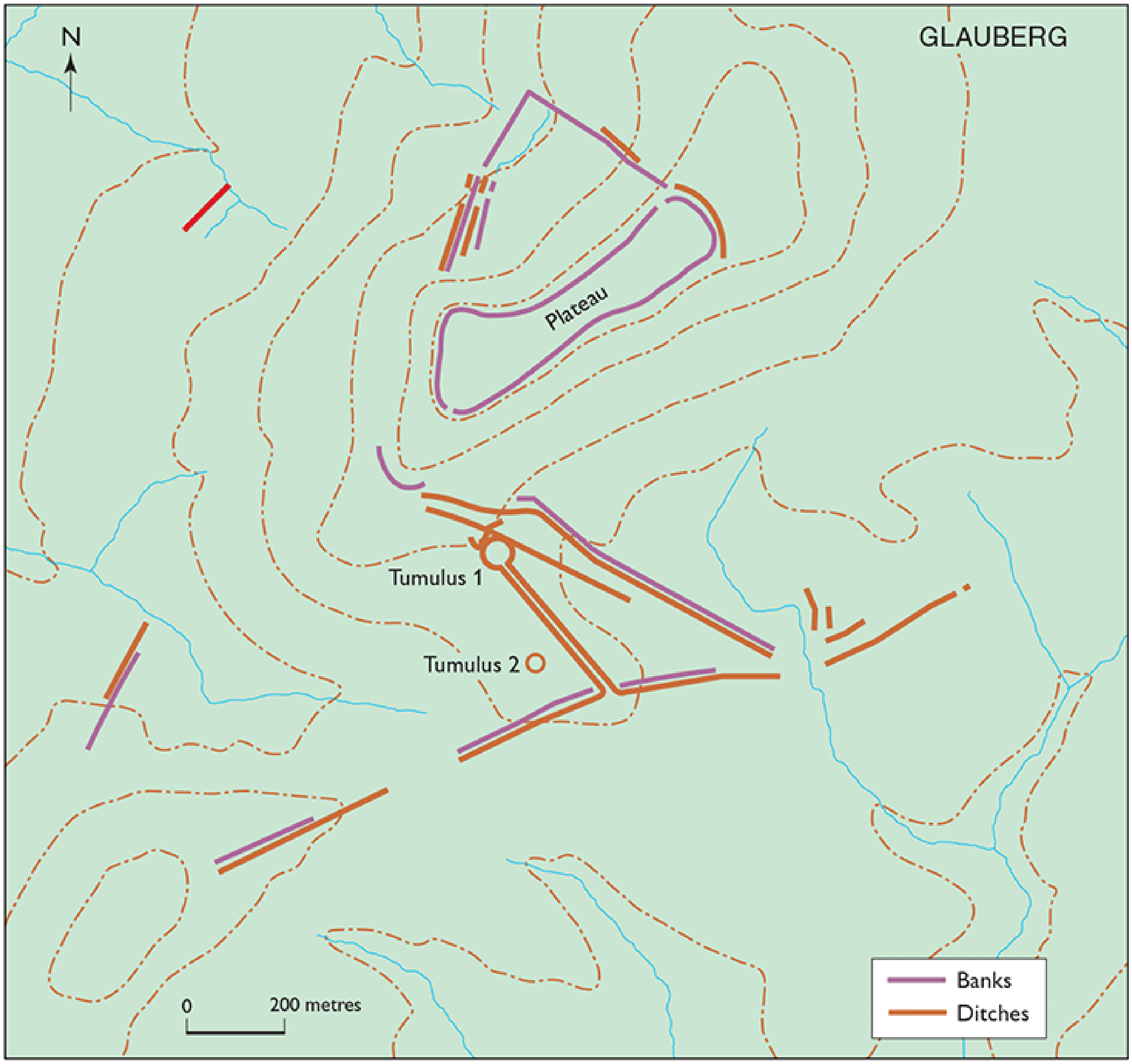
5.25 Greek bronze cauldron from the princely burial of Hochdorf. One of the decorative lions is a replacement made in inferior style. The cauldron probably contained mead when buried. Landesmuseum Württemberg, Stuttgart.

The settlement at Bragny-sur-Saône was re-established at this time following a phase of destruction. Numerous items of north Italic origin were recovered, together with Golasecca-type pottery, thus demonstrating the continued use of a long-lived port-of-trade. The presence of Massiliot amphorae in the same layers, however, shows that the Rhône corridor continued to function.

Among the most prolific of the Etruscan exports of the period 480–420 BC was the beaked flagon used as a wine-pouring vessel (Map 14), sometimes accompanied by bronze stamnoi (Map 13). Made in Etruscan cities such as Vulci and exported through the Golaseccan middlemen, they travelled far into barbarian territory. A particularly dense concentration in the elite graves of the Middle Rhine dating to the latter half of the fifth century—the La Tène A period—suggests a very deliberate and well-focused axis of exchange which no doubt contributed to the emergence of a discrete zone of power on the northern fringe of the old West Hallstatt cultural zone. The impression given by this striking phenomenon is that Etruscan trade through the Alpine passes was being given focus by newly emerging elites in the north. The southern link is further demonstrated by the stone statue found near the barrow at Hirschlanden in Baden-Württemberg, which has very close stylistic similarities to north Italian statues.



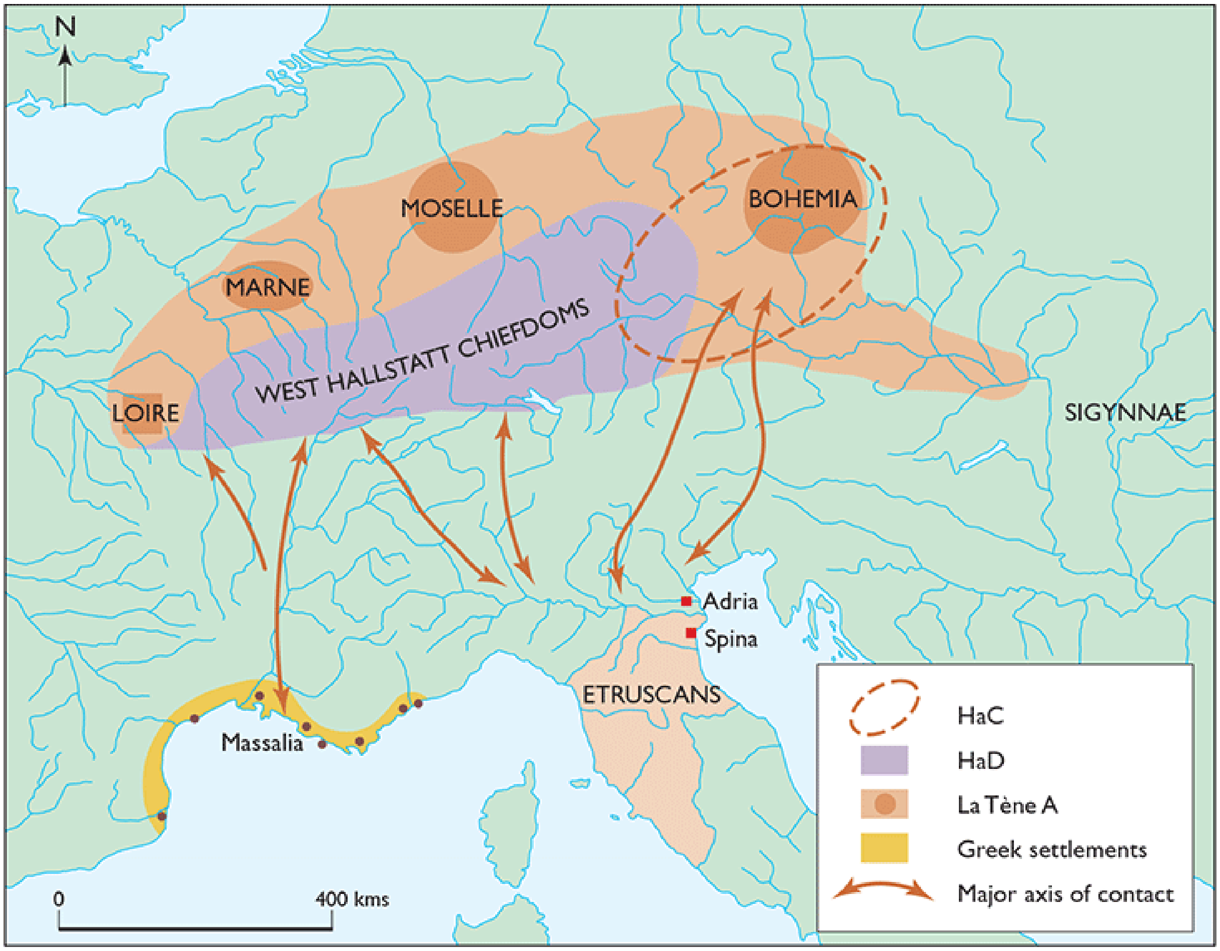
5.26 One of the nine drinking horns from the Hochdorf burial bound with bronze and gold. Landesmuseum Württemberg, Stuttgart.



5.27 The stone statue found at Hirschlanden, Baden-Württemberg, Germany, probably once stood on top of the burial mound excavated nearby. It dates to the second half of the sixth century BC and compares in style to statues from northern Italy. The nakedness of the warrior, wearing only a sword belt and neck torc, was to become a characteristic of Celts in battle in the fifth century and after. The conical hat which the figure wears is very similar to the birchbark hat worn by the chieftain buried at Hochdorf. Landesmuseum Württemberg, Stuttgart.

New Centres of Power: The La Tène Elite, 450/440–380/370 BC

In the middle of the fifth century the political geography of barbarian Europe changed dramatically. While the processes and precise chronology of these changes are not easy to define, the broad picture stands out with clarity, and it is from this point that the discussion is best begun. Simply stated, over much of the west central Hallstatt elite burial zone rich burials ceased and the hillforts occupied by the aristocracy came to an end, in the case of Heuneburg with a catastrophic fire. Meanwhile, in a broad zone to the north stretching from the Loire to Bohemia there developed, in the course of the La Tène A period, a warrior aristocracy which frequently buried its dead with their spears and swords. It was in this zone that the highly distinctive Celtic art style emerged to serve the aristocratic market (Map 19).


N
MOSELLE
BOHEMIA
MARNE
WEST HALLSTATT CHIEFDOMS
LOIRE
SIGYNNAE
Adria
Spina
ETRUSCANS
Massalia
0
400 kms
HaC
HaD
La Tène A
Greek settlements
Major axis of contact

5.28 The settlement of Glauberg, Hesse, Germany, dating to the late sixth century BC, in the Middle Rhine region. Tumulus 1 produced the famous statue illustrated in Fig. 10.24.

One of the difficulties of studying this change is the imprecision of our chronologies. Did the La Tène period begin immediately after the end of the Hallstatt in *c*.450, as some would argue, or was there an overlap of a generation or so, with the earliest La Tène beginning *c*.480? On balance, a period of overlap seems more likely.

Early La Tène culture differed in many significant ways from that of the old Hallstatt chiefdoms; the geographical focus of the two barely overlapped. In the La Tène burials fighting weapons were frequent, in contrast to the Late Hallstatt elite, whose only weapons were for hunting or display; moreover, the La Tène aristocracy favoured the two-wheeled vehicle as a funerary cart in contrast to the heavier traditional four-wheeled vehicle. The one important similarity was that both had a system of elite burial employing a funerary vehicle together with sets of wine-drinking equipment derived from, or inspired by, the accoutrements of the Mediterranean *symposion*.

A plausible explanation for the evidence, so far discussed, is that towards the middle of the fifth century BC centres of power and innovation shifted from the old west central Hallstatt core to its immediate northern periphery. Why this should be is a matter to which we shall return.

That there was a significant degree of continuity between the Late Hallstatt and Early La Tène social systems is evident. This is particularly true of the Middle Rhineland. In the Late Hallstatt period the focus of power was in the valley of the Neckar between Stuttgart and Heilbronn, centred on the hillfort of Hohenasperg, around which there clustered a remarkable group of elite burials at places including Hochdorf, Grafenbühl, and Römerhügel, all dated to the Hallstatt D2–3 phase. Little is known of the chronology of the Hohenasperg settlement, but the possibility that it continued to be occupied into Early La Tène times is suggested by the concentration of elite burials in the area. Both Grafenbühl and Römerhügel were later used for La Tène burials. Another burial mound at Kleinaspergle contained a grave chamber with a burial accompanied by gold-mounted drinking horns, four bronze vessels including an Etruscan stamnos, and two Attic cups, dating to the La Tène A period. The continuity of power in this area throughout the fifth century is impressive.

Another focus of power lay some 150 kilometres north-west in the valley of the Moselle close to its confluence with the Rhine. Here several elite burials of the Late Hallstatt period have been discovered, including the well-known vehicle burial of Bell. During the fifth century the number of rich graves in the region increased dramatically. Many of the tombs contained bronze vessels imported from Etruscan workshops at Vulci and elsewhere. These include the characteristic beaked flagons, stamnoi, amphorae, and bowls. The number and density of these exotics vividly demonstrate the close links between the Rhineland and Etruria at this time (Maps 13 and 14). Even more impressive is the array of locally manufactured gold-work and the inventiveness of local craftsmen in adopting and adapting Etruscan motifs in a highly selective manner to create an entirely new art form.

If we take the Middle Rhine as a single region, we can suggest that in the early fifth century BC there were probably two centres of power, one in the Neckar valley and one in the Moselle, with the Neckar region being the more prominent. By the end of the century in what is now the Early La Tène period a distinct shift had taken place, with the Moselle region now being not only rich but vibrant and innovative. Throughout, economic links were maintained with the Etruscan world to the south, though whether the impetus for trade came directly from the Etruscan cities or was instigated by entrepreneurs in the now thriving Golasecca centres is a debatable point.

The second major centre of innovation in the Early La Tène period was the valley of the Marne, lying some 150 kilometres north of the Late Hallstatt centre focused on Vix. Already in this period occupation was intense and the rite of vehicle burial is known from a tomb containing a four-wheeled cart at Les Jogasses. The number of burials increased dramatically throughout the fifth century, and elite burial became more common (though rare compared with the Moselle region). Characteristically, the dead aristocrat was buried in a pit accompanied by a two-wheeled vehicle, a range of harness trappings, and a drinking set. Etruscan bronze vessels have been recovered from burials at Somme-Bionne, Somme-Tourbe, and Sept-Saulx, while Somme-Bionne also contained a red-figure Attic cup dated to *c.*420. If the archaeological evidence is a fair reflection of the actual number of elite burials in the region, then it was significantly poorer than the Moselle valley and evidently had less access to luxury goods from the south. In spite of this, Marnian culture displays a high degree of stability during the fifth century and its craftsmen played a significant part in the development of a distinctive style of Celtic art.

The relationship between the Moselle and Marne groups in the latter part of the fifth century raises a number of questions. They shared a common warrior-dominated social system and at some levels a common material culture based on patterns of exchange, but by any standards the Marnians were the poor relations and may indeed have depended for their Mediterranean prestige goods on reciprocal exchanges with the Moselle communities, whose access to the south was direct. It is interesting to speculate what commodities the Marne may have been able to exploit. One possibility is that its links with the Seine provided a means of tapping into Atlantic systems producing the much-desired tin. Another is that the warrior society was able to supply a flow of slaves, useful in exchanges with the south. Direct evidence is, however, lacking.

A subsidiary focus of power in the fifth century lay in western France, at Bourges, which lies on the confluence of the Auron and the Yèvre, a tributary of the Cher. Settlement levels have produced quantities of Massiliot amphorae together with a range of Attic black- and red-figure wares spanning the fifth century. Contemporary technological innovations included the local adoption of the potter’s wheel. A variety of elite burials have also been found containing imported vessels. Judging by the date range of the imported pottery recovered, it is clear that Bourges was already established as a significant trading centre in the Late Hallstatt period and continued to function throughout the Early La Tène. It was well situated to control the movement of goods from the Atlantic corridor.

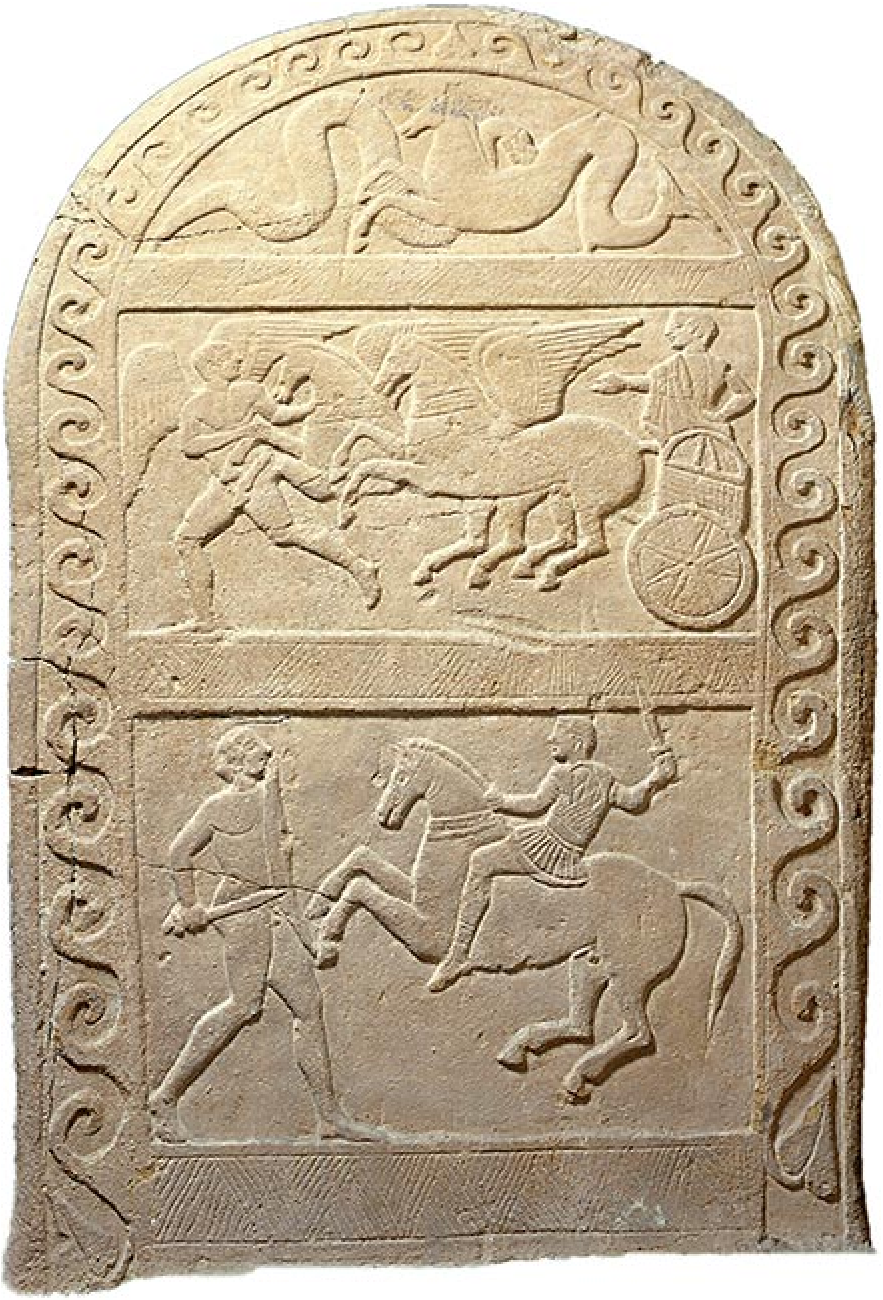
The fifth century also sees the development of an axis of communication extending from the Po valley through the territory of the Veneti and along the eastern fringes of the Alps to the valley of the Vltava and the North European Plain beyond. This long-established route saw the transport of Baltic amber southwards to the Adriatic. From about 1000 BC salt, mined at Hallstatt, would have contributed to the flow of commodities passing along the east Alpine corridor. About 600 BC the rich salt deposits at Dürrnberg (near Salzburg) began to be worked in parallel with the Hallstatt mines. Both ceased production about 400 BC.

The community at Dürrnberg began to increase in size and prosperity at the beginning of the fifth century and a cemetery of several hundred burials was established. Among them were two elite burials, each with a two-wheeled funerary vehicle. One produced a locally made bronze-beaked flagon inspired by Etruscan prototypes, the other a range of elaborate locally made wine-drinking equipment together with a pottery Attic kylix made in about 470. The occupant, a male, was also provided with his warrior equipment including a bronze helmet, an iron sword, three spears, and bows and arrows. The Dürrnberg finds are particularly interesting in that, like those of the Moselle and Marne, they demonstrate trade links to the Po valley that provided goods and inspiration for highly inventive local craftsmen. The difference, however, is that some of the concepts incorporated by the craftsmen were learned from the already well-developed bronze-working skills of the Venetic community to the south.

To the north of Dürrnberg the amber route led through the valley of the Vltava and the territory of Bohemia. Here, one of the principal sites was the settlement of Závist, south of Prague. It was established in the Hallstatt period and developed throughout the fifth century as a major cult centre. That a number of Bohemian cemeteries also show continuity throughout the sixth and fifth centuries indicates a degree of social and economic stability. It was during the latter part of the fifth century that elite burials began to appear, characterized by Etruscan wine-drinking equipment. Some of the graves also produced items of gold and silver. Although the exact form of the Bohemian graves is not known in detail, their number (eight at present) and the range of imports indicate a distinctive enclave with close contacts via the Dürrnberg region to the Adriatic.

Standing back from the evidence, summarized here, we can see that during the course of the fifth century there arose two zones of power and innovation: a Loire–Marne–Moselle zone in the west with trading links to the Po valley via the central Alpine passes and the Golasecca culture, and a Bohemian zone in the east with separate links to the Adriatic via the eastern Alpine routes and the Venetic culture. Both zones, and their constituent regions, had already begun to develop as significant foci of power towards the end of the Late Hallstatt phase, but what stands out as particularly dramatic is that most of the core of the West Hallstatt elite zone, so dominant in the late sixth and early fifth centuries, was now a cultural backwater. In other words, as the centre decayed, its northern periphery flourished—in much the same way as a mushroom ring grows.

What caused these changes? On the one hand, it could be argued that readjustments in trading imperatives among the Mediterranean states sparked social dislocation north of the Alps, thereby upsetting the delicate balance of the prestige goods economy. Perhaps the interests of the Greek cities of the Golfe du Lion turned more to the west as the lucrative Iberian market developed, leaving the northern markets open to exclusive Etruscan manipulation. It could also be that internal social dynamics in Transalpine Europe drove the change. The elite of the peripheral zone, for so long producing the supplies of raw materials such as furs, amber, iron, gold, and slaves for the core, may have developed a desire for southern luxuries. Given the warrior nature of the peripheral society, reflecting no doubt the practice of raiding, it is possible that there may have been aggressive moves against the West Hallstatt core, thus destabilizing the old system and leading to its collapse. Perhaps it was a combination of all these factors which eventually brought about the dramatic changes of the fifth century. At any event, by about 400 BC the scene was set for a new act in the story of Europe—the Celtic migrations.



6

The Migrations

450–50 BC

ON 18 July 390 BC the army of Rome was soundly defeated by a horde of Celts on the banks of the river Allia not far from the city. It was a devastating moment for the Romans, as they saw their city ransacked by these little-known northern barbarians. According to tradition, the consul M. Popillius Laenas had told the citizens before the event: ‘These are not civilized people who will become your ally when you have taken their city but wild beasts whose blood we must shed or spill our own.’ The attack remained a vivid memory in Rome’s collective consciousness, and stories about the Celts pouring into Italy from beyond the Alps would have been told to every schoolchild. We begin, therefore, by considering the migrations through the eyes of Greek and Roman historians, always remembering that they were writing long after the event.

The Graeco-Roman Tradition

The classic Roman view of the Celtic migrations is provided by Livy, writing towards the end of the first century BC; it deserves to be quoted in full.

> The Celts, who make up one of the three divisions of Gaul, were under the domination of the Bituriges and this tribe supplied the Celtic nation with a king. Ambigatus was then the man and his talents â€¦ had brought him great distinction; for Gaul under his sway grew so

> rich in corn and so populous, that it seemed hardly possible to govern so great a multitude. The king, now old, wishing to relieve his kingdom of a burdensome throng, announced that he meant to send Bellovesus and Segovesus, his sister's two sons, two enterprising young men, to find such homes as the gods might assign to them by augury; and promised them that they should head as large a number of emigrants as they themselves desired, so that no tribe might be able to prevent their settlement. Whereupon to Segovesus were by lot assigned the Hercynian highlands [the Black Forest and Bohemia], but to Bellovesus the gods proposed a far pleasanter road, into Italy. Taking with him the surplus population—Bituriges, Arverni, Senones, Aedui, Ambarri, Carnutes, Aulerci—he set out with a vast host, some mounted, some on foot.
>
> (*Hist.* 5. 34)

Livy goes on to describe how they passed through the Alps by the passes of Taurine and Duria and defeated the Etruscans near the river Ticinus. Thereafter they established a settlement at Mediolanum (Milan).

Pompeius Trogus, a native of southern Gaul who composed his histories at the time of the emperor Augustus, adds that, in addition to Mediolanum, the first Celtic settlements included Como, Brescia, Verona, Bergamo, Trento, and Vicenza. His understanding of the initial stages of the migrations was similar to that of Livy in that he believed overpopulation to have been the reason for the Gauls sending '300,000 men to seek new territories'. 'Some', he said, 'settled in Italy … some led by birds spread through the head of the Adriatic and settled in Pannonia.'

Livy dates these events to the reign of the Roman king Tarquinius Priscus, which would place the migrations in the period about 600 BC. The Greek historian Polybius, who wrote in the early second century BC, firmly believed them to have taken place some 200 years later. Livy was clearly aware of this discrepancy when he went on to say:

> it was two hundred years before the attack on Clusium and the capture of Rome that the Gauls first crossed over into Italy: neither were the Clusini the first of the Etruscans with whom they fought: but long before that the Gallic armies had often given battle to those who dwelt between the Apennines and the Alps.

Livy's remarks raise questions which will be considered below when the archaeological evidence is examined.

While it is generally agreed by the ancient authors that overpopulation in the Celtic homeland was the initial prime cause of the migrations, the reason for the movement to Italy was seen to be the lure of the products of the south. The point is explicitly made by Pliny:

> The Gauls, imprisoned as they were by the Alps … first found a motive for overflowing into Italy from the circumstance of a Gallic citizen from Switzerland named Helico who had lived in Rome because of his skill as a craftsman, [and had] brought with him, when he came back, some dried figs and grapes and some samples of oil and wine: consequently we may excuse them for having sought to obtain these things even by means of war.
>
> (*Nat. Hist.* 12. 2. 5)

Much the same point is made by Livy—that it was the attraction of ‘delicious fruits and especially wine’ that drew the Celts south. He adds the unlikely anecdote that the Celts were deliberately enticed by an Etruscan, Arruns, from Clusium, in order to bring retribution on those who had seduced his wife (*Hist*. 5. 34).

As one might expect, the historical tradition has a degree of cohesion. Against this we may now consider the archaeological evidence.

A Prelude to the Migration of 400 BC?

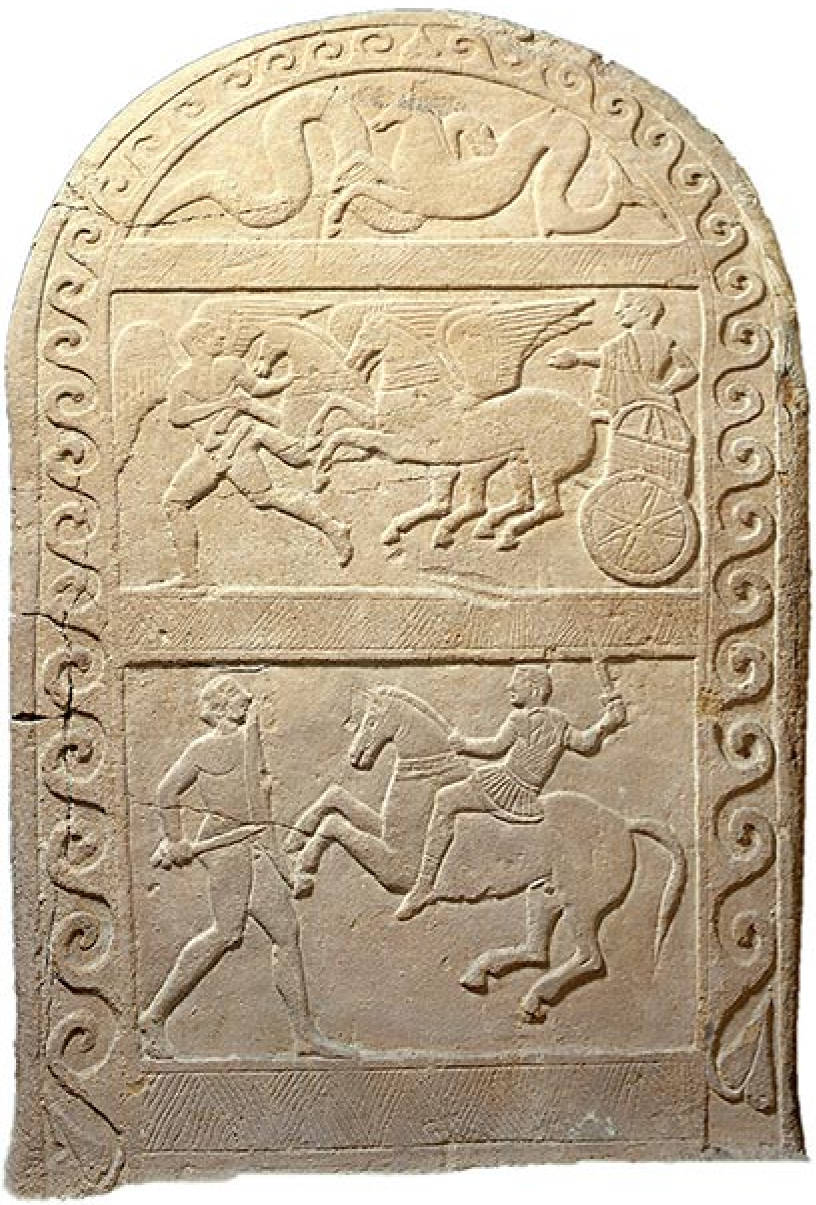
Livy’s considered view, that there was a Celtic penetration of the Po valley in the two centuries before the main migration in *c*.400 BC, is not, on the face of it, unreasonable. A foreknowledge, based on raid and trade, is often found to be a precursor to migration and settlement. The obvious place to look for evidence is the Golasecca culture of the Upper Po valley.

The language spoken in the region covered archaeologically by the Golasecca culture was Lepontic—an Indo-European tongue closely related to ‘Celtic’ which can be traced back, by means of inscriptions, to as early as the sixth century BC. Here, at least superficially, is evidence which might be used in support of earlier Celtic folk movements, but, since no break in culture can be recognized at this time, it is generally assumed that the Lepontic language has its roots much earlier, perhaps in the genesis of the culture as defined archaeologically in the late second millennium. The similarity of the languages on both sides of the Alps would have facilitated intercourse between the two zones over a long period.

That active contact was, indeed, maintained is abundantly clear from the archaeological evidence. Vehicles found in the burials at Ca’Morta and Sesto Calende are vivid demonstrations of an exchange of ideas and possibly even of goods at an aristocratic level. Weapons too, in particular the short swords and daggers of the Golasecca region, have close affinities to those found in the region from Burgundy to southern Germany in the period from the seventh to the fifth centuries BC. Many similarities can be recognized among pottery types. Reciprocal influences can also be claimed based on the discovery, in the Transalpine area, of small trinkets such as bronze pendants common in the Golaseccan cultural zone and we have already referred to the range of Golaseccan material found at the trading port of Bragny-sur-Saône in the fifth century. Taken together, the evidence suggests that close links between the two zones were maintained for at least three centuries before 400 BC. It could be argued that the Golasecca culture underwent a degree of 'Celticization' during this period.

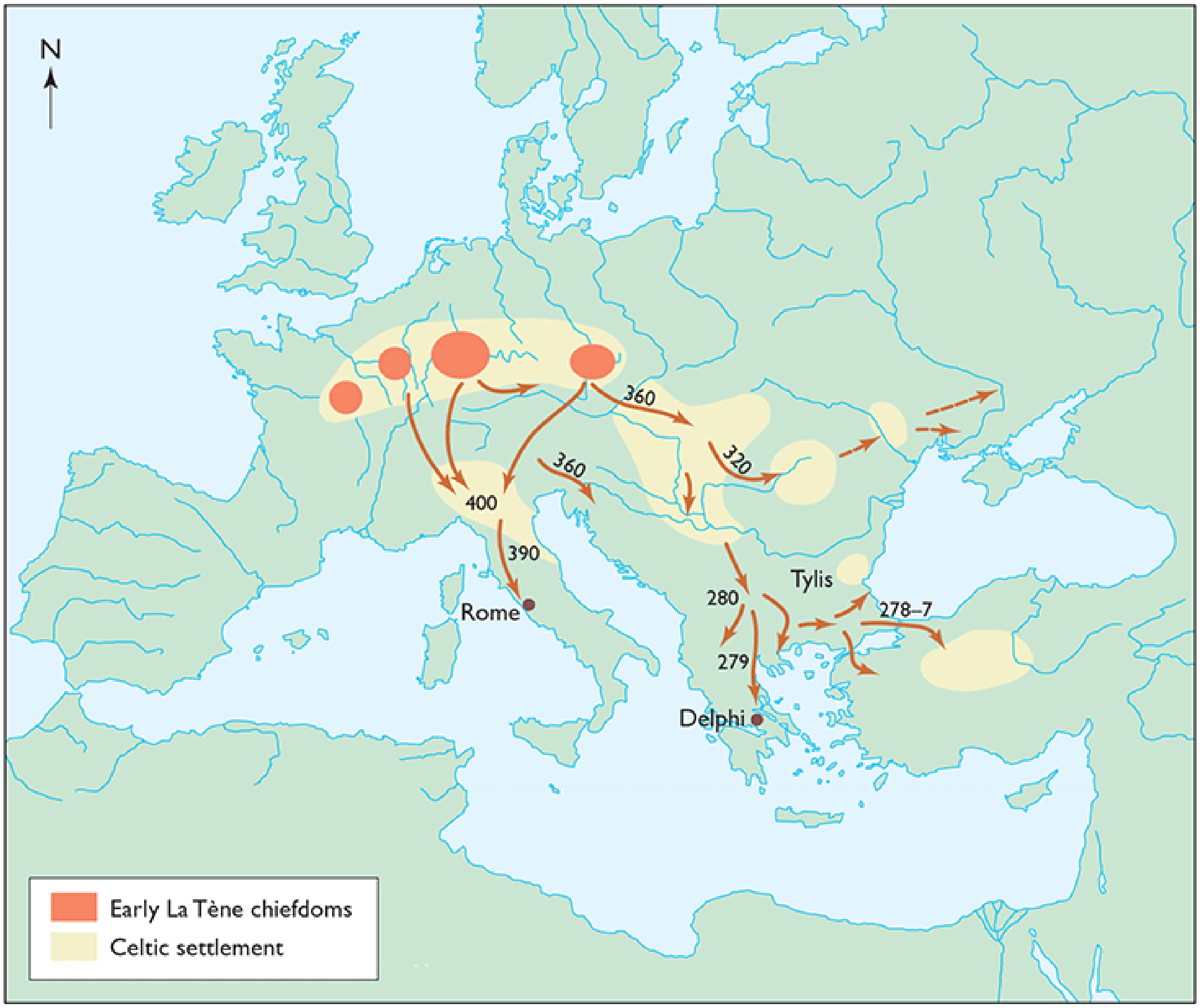
The question at issue is the extent to which Celtic peoples from the north moved south to establish enclaves either among the Golaseccan communities or, more likely, beyond their southern border in land disputed by the advancing Etruscans. Some evidence for such groups has been claimed on the basis of weapon types found with burials at Casola Valsenio near Bologna and at San Martino further to the south-east, both cemeteries being dated by Attic pottery to within the fifth century. Also of fifth-century date are the famous grave stelae from Bologna depicting Celtic-style warriors in battle. While the evidence is not extensive it does suggest the presence of warriors, adopting Transalpine weapon types and fighting methods, in the Po valley by the fifth century.

A closer reading of the classical texts may provide a further insight into the problem. Polybius (*Hist.* 2. 17), in a somewhat enigmatic sentence, speaks of Celts as neighbours to the Etruscans. Envying the beauty of the Etruscan territory they 'gathered a great host and expelled the Etruscans from the valley of the Padus'. This might suggest a phase of Celtic settlement preceding the main migration. In another passage Livy (*Hist.* 5. 34) mentions that the invading Celts, 'having learnt that they were in what was known as the territory of the Insubres, the same name as one of the cantons of the Aedui, took it as a favourable omen and founded the town of Mediolanum'. A *possible* implication of this is that the Insubres, who occupied the territory south of the Golasecca culture just north of the Po at the time of the main migration, may have been a Celtic community long established in the region.



6.1 Stone funerary stela found at Bologna dating to the fifth century BC. The lowest panel shows a mounted Etruscan attacking a naked Celtic foot soldier. Museo Civico Archeologico, Bologna.

The whole question of a pre-400 BC Celtic settlement in the Po valley is impossible to resolve with certainty, though, on balance, the evidence would allow there to have been an early settlement of Celtic warrior groups in the frontier zone between the Golaseccan domain and the Etruscans. Such enclaves, perhaps encouraged to come initially as mercenaries by the Golaseccan communities, may have been numerous enough to have retained a degree of ethnic identity sufficient to have impressed the sources upon which Livy based his *History*. Their presence and links which they may have maintained with the homeland would have facilitated the massive influx which began about 400 BC.


N
400
390
360
360
320
280
279
278–7
Tylis
Rome
Delphi
Early La Tène chiefdoms
Celtic settlement

6.2 The principal movements of the Celts, 400–270 BC.

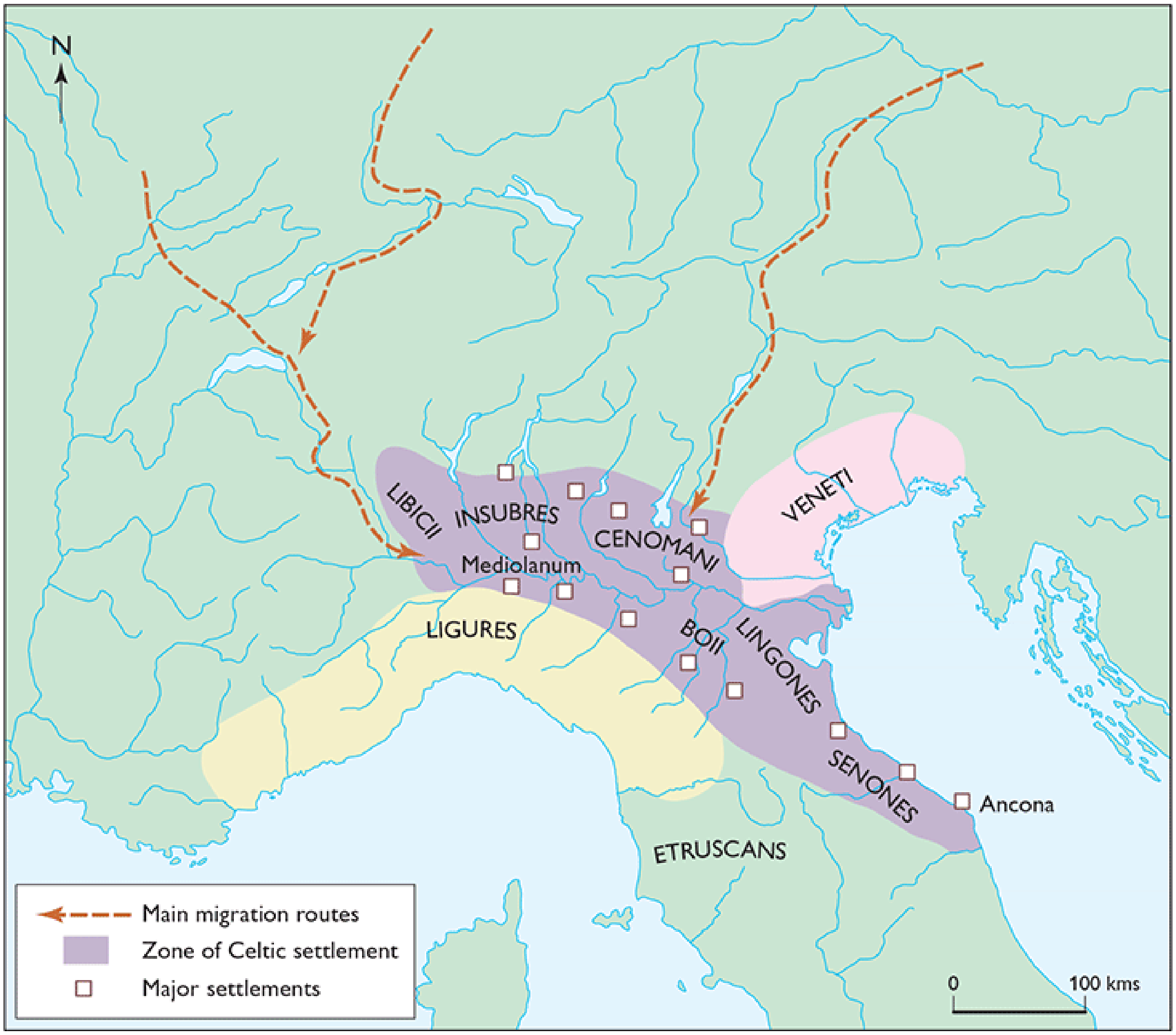
The Initial Settlement: *c*.400 BC

Polybius provides an outline of the course of the migration. The lands near the Po were occupied by the Laevi and Libicii, then came the Insubres, and, to the east of them, on the north bank of the river, settled the

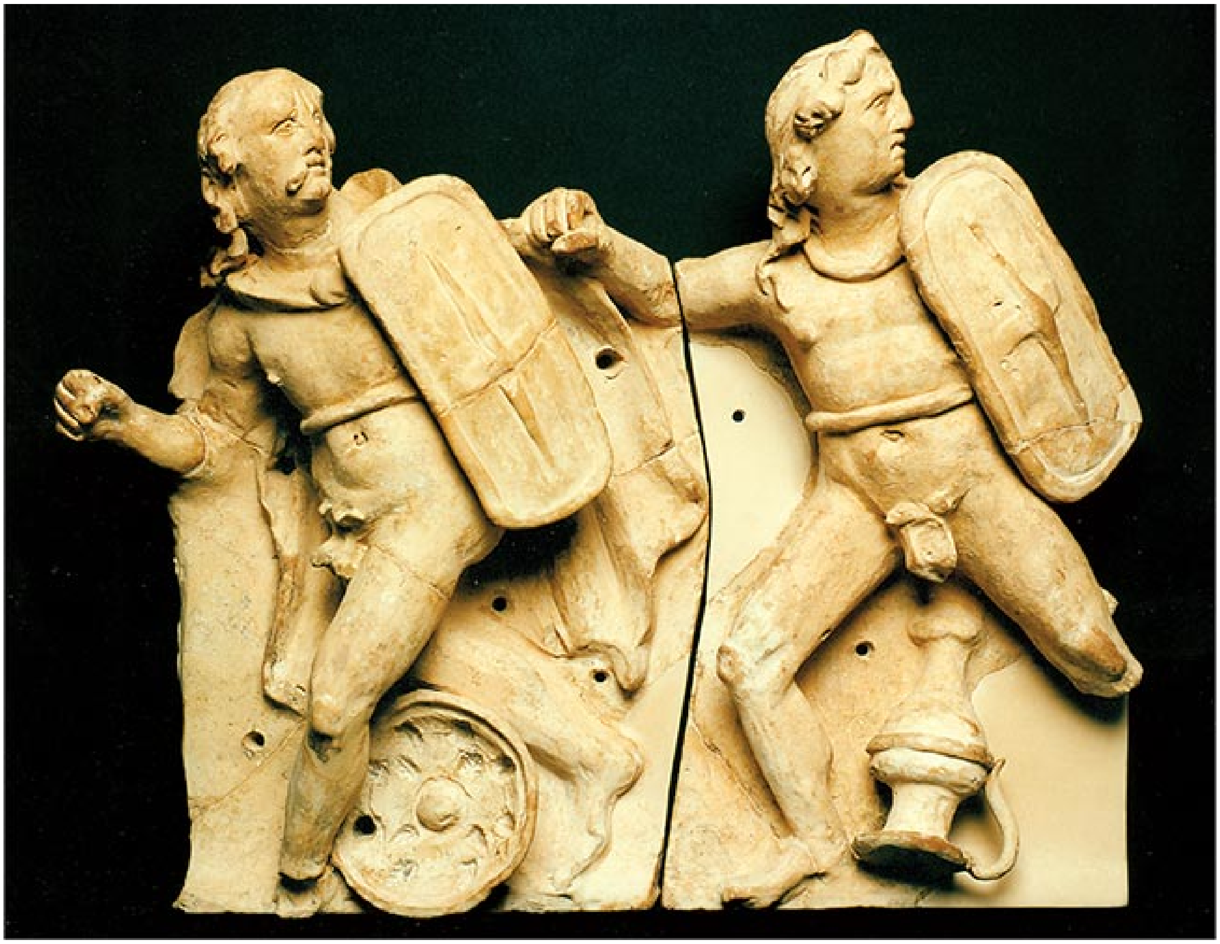
Cenomani. Further penetration eastwards was halted by the Veneti, a long-established indigenous tribe. South of the Po, in the west, close to the Apennines, the Ananes settled, with the Boii to the east and the Lingones along the Adriatic coast. To the south of them, along the littoral, the Senones appropriated territory. Polybius mentions that at a later date the two largest tribes, the Insubres and the Boii, sent messages to tribes living ‘about the Alps and on the Rhône’ calling for additional forces. These mercenary bands, called Gaesatae, arrived in formidable numbers ‘furnished with a variety of armour’.

Polybius (*Hist.* 2. 17) then goes on to provide a sketch of the life of the Celtic communities. They occupied open villages and lived simple lives following ‘no pursuit other than war and agriculture’. Wealth was measured in gold and cattle, which could be easily transported when ‘they wandered from place to place and changed their dwelling as their fancy directed’. Hospitality was important and a man’s status was gauged by the size of his entourage of clients or ‘companions in his wanderings’. The entourage is often presented as a characteristic of Celtic warrior society by classical writers.

Archaeological evidence for the Celtic settlement of the Po valley is already considerable and is increasing rapidly; it is now possible to identify cultural differences reflecting different tribal groups. One notable characteristic—the prevalence of cremation among the Boii—serves both to distinguish them from other Celtic communities in the Po valley and to link them to the Bohemian homeland from which they came. Boian inhumation burials generally lacked ankle rings and torcs, while their arm rings were often arranged in a distinctive asymmetric way. These, too, are characteristics of contemporary communities in Bohemia. The burials of the Senones and Cenomani, on the other hand, reflect more closely styles already apparent in the Marne region. Distinctive belt hooks were found in both regions; females often wore torcs; and arm rings were symmetrically arranged. Taken together, the evidence emerging for regional patterns and their Transalpine parallels is beginning to offer a striking confirmation of the traditional account of the settlement.


N
LIBICII
INSUBRES
CENOMANI
VENETI
Mediolanum
LIGURES
BOII
LINGONES
SENONES
Ancona
ETRUSCANS
Main migration routes
Zone of Celtic settlement
Major settlements
0
100 kms

6.3 The Celtic tribes of the Po valley and the migration routes by which they arrived. The Ligurians and the Veneti were indigenous peoples.



6.4 Fragment of a stone frieze from Civitalba, Marches, Italy. The partial scene shows two fleeing Celts dropping spoils of war. Both are long-haired and naked apart from belts and cloaks, as the classical stereotype of the Celtic barbarian requires. The shields are typical of Celtic armour. Museo Archeologico Nazionale della Marche, Ancona, Italy.

In their new homeland the Celtic communities came into close contact with Graeco-Etruscan culture, and inevitably there was a degree of assimilation. This was most noticeable in the artistic field, where Celtic craftsmen began to incorporate new motifs into their decorative creations. The dissemination of Celtic items made in Italy, and quite possibly the movement of craftsmen, to the Transalpine homelands introduced a new vitality to the now flourishing workshops of temperate Europe. Thus, through a different social mechanism the Graeco-Etruscan world continued to influence the Transalpine communities.

The Celtic Homeland at the Time of the Migrations

In the fourth century two principal axes of communication existed between the Transalpine regions and the Po valley: a western route funnelling from the Seine, Marne, and Rhine, through the Great St Bernard Pass, to the upper reaches of the valley and an eastern route from the Upper Danube, and Bohemia beyond, via the river Inn and the eastern Alpine passes, to the lower reaches of the plain. It was along these traditional routes that the migrating bands most likely passed, drawing off surplus population from the Marne, Moselle, and Bohemian regions, where, as we have seen, the centres of innovation were developing at this time.

Of the two reasons given by the classical writers for the folk movement—overpopulation and the lure of southern luxuries—the first is more likely to have been the prime cause. An increase in population, especially in societies which had created warrior systems as an essential part of the social structure, would inevitably have led to instability. This could best have been alleviated by the reduction of population through migration. But the situation may have been more complicated. The warrior elites of the four core Early La Tène territories—along the Loire, the Marne, the Moselle, and in Bohemia—needed to maintain their status by acts of prowess and by their ability to command sizeable entourages. One way this could be done was by leading a raid, which, if successful, would reward both the leader and his followers. This is the kind of system which Polybius recorded among the Cisalpine Celts. We have already seen that, within the northern peripheral zone, raiding may have developed to provide resources which the prestige goods system of the core needed to distribute to maintain itself. Once established, raiding may have become embedded in the social system of the Early La Tène periphery, generating a momentum of its own, particularly after the collapse of the West Hallstatt chiefdoms. In this way, one of the defining characteristics of Celtic society was created.

In such a situation, the problem of a growing population could be dealt with in several ways. At its simplest, a small entourage under a leader could move out from the homeland to find a new ecological niche to occupy. A process such as this would have led to the establishment of enclaves of elite warriors, distant from the homeland, who might, at least for a generation or two, have retained their identity in an archaeologically visible form. It is possible that the clusters of Early La Tène vehicle burials along the Lower Seine, in the Ardennes and the Haine, and even the group of burials which emerged in Yorkshire may be a reflection of this kind of small-scale warrior exodus.

At the other end of the scale, larger bands of roaming warriors having no particular territorial base may have come together under one or more charismatic leader. It is quite possible that the Gaesatae—warriors who, according to Polybius, were ‘available for hire’ and were decked out in ‘a variety of armour’ and were to be found ‘about the Alps and on the Rhône’—were itinerant fighters of this kind. A growing population and rigid social constraints in the homelands could well have driven young men to leave home to swell their numbers. In such a turbulent and unstable situation, it would need only the decision on the part of one leader to take his entourage to the rich pickings of the south for the news to spread and others to follow, swelling the numbers to a migration and creating a momentum which drew in the ambitious young from distant regions. An escalating social upheaval of this kind could explain the apparently rapid movement of Celtic populations into the Po valley; it might also have left traces in the home territories.

The most convincing evidence for an exodus of population comes from the Marne region. A study of the rich burial data shows that during the fifth century a large stable population occupied the region, its elite buried in state with their two-wheeled vehicles and wine-drinking equipment. But sometime about 400 BC the population suddenly declined. Thereafter, only one major focus remained, in the Reims area, while much of the rest of the Champagne region appears to have been largely deserted. Taken at face value, the evidence suggests that a high proportion of the population may have moved out, leaving only one lineage to maintain a single power centre.

Much the same kind of evidence can be seen in the Rhineland. Although there was a marked degree of continuity between the distribution and range of burials from the fifth to the fourth centuries, a sharp reduction in the actual number of burials is recorded, particularly of warrior burials normally accompanied by swords. The evidence from Bohemia is rather less clear-cut, but a number of cemeteries came to an end at the end of the fifth century and elite burials disappeared. The archaeological data is therefore consistent with there having been a major social upheaval in Transalpine Europe at the time of the early migrations.

From what has been said it is reasonable to suppose that the four most developed centres of Early La Tène culture contributed to populations which made their way through the Alpine passes about 400 BC to set themselves up in the lush lands of the Po valley. But the Celtic tribes Livy mentions by name as taking part were numerous. The names of many still appeared on the political map of Gaul sketched by Julius Caesar in the middle of the first century BC, being located within the broad territory stretching from the Marne south to the Massif Central and from the Rhône to the Middle Loire valley—the core of Caesar’s Celtic zone of Gaul. While it might at first sight be tempting to suggest that it was from this huge territory that the migrating tribes came, tribal mobility in subsequent centuries is likely to have confused the picture. Indeed, it may be that many of the tribes encountered by Caesar in central Gaul arrived in their traditional territories at the time of the initial migrations as sectional groups splitting from diffuse migratory bands. The situation is likely to have been confused and the archaeological evidence is too ill-focused yet to throw much light on it.

The Celts in Italy: 400–180 BC

The initial Celtic settlement of the Po valley at the end of the fifth century brought the invaders hard up against the barrier of the Apennines—a barrier permeated by well-trodden routes linking the Etruscan-dominated north to the Etruscan homeland backing onto the Tyrrhenian Sea. Inevitably Celtic war bands were drawn southwards into the heart of Etruria. This occurred at the moment that Rome, expanding her power northwards, was taking over the old Etruscan cities one by one. The clash that followed is recorded in some detail by Polybius and by Livy, though offering slightly different chronologies.

The first stage of the southern thrust brought the Celts to the Etruscan town of Clusium in 391 BC, where their principal demand was to be assigned land to settle. Roman ambassadors were sent to act on behalf of the city, but negotiations broke down and in the ensuing battle the ambassadors, in breach of accepted custom, joined in the mÃªlÃ©e, one of them killing a Celtic warlord. The Celts’ demand for recompense was ignored by the Roman authorities, thus hastening the next stage of the Celtic advance—the march on Rome.

In July 390 (Livy’s date; Polybius says 386), at the Tiber tributary the Allia, the Roman army was destroyed and the city, all except the defended Capitol, fell. The sack of Rome was followed by months of uncertainty, with the Celtic warriors camped around the city growing increasingly restive as they suffered waves of disease. Eventually an agreement was reached and the Celts departed with 1,000 pounds of gold given by the thankful Roman authorities. It is possible that news of aggressive moves by the Veneti on the eastern border of the Po valley settlements may have encouraged their departure. A more likely explanation is that the rapid advance of 391–390 was little more than a series of exploratory raids from the home base north of the Apennines, and, with honour, curiosity, and the desire for spoils assuaged, the warring bands could return home satisfied.

The devastating blow to Rome’s power and authority was in part responsible for the unrest which gripped central Italy throughout the next half-century or so, during which time Celtic raids and Celtic mercenary forces made intermittent appearances, best understood as examples of the Celtic raiding practices described earlier in this chapter. Expeditions of this kind may have been constantly mounted by the tribes settled on the Apennine flank. The more ambitious and deep-thrusting of these raids brought the Celts into episodic contact with Roman forces.

Celtic mercenaries were an altogether different matter. Bands of Celtic warriors willing to fight were available for employment and were seen as a useful resource by aspiring tyrants. One such man was Dionysius of Syracuse, who, having gained control of the Etruscan port of Adria, established a colony further down the coast, at Ancona, in the territory occupied by the Senones. Ancona provided a convenient base from which to enlist Celtic mercenaries. An alliance was struck in 385, and one band of mercenaries, returning from action in southern Italy, joined Dionysius’ naval expedition in an attack on the Etruscan port of Pyrgi in 384–383. Thereafter Ancona continued to provide Dionysius and his son with mercenaries for thirty years. For the most part they served in Italy, but one force was transported to Greece in 367 to take part in the conflict of Sparta and her allies against Thebes. Livy also mentions the presence of Celtic armies in Apulia, one of which moved against Rome in 367. The fact that another attack came from the same area in 149 might suggest that there may have been a long-established Celtic enclave in the area, but there is little archaeological evidence for this, except for the rich grave of Canosa di Puglia with its extremely fine Celtic helmet dated to the late fourth century BC.

By the 330s Rome had recovered sufficiently to begin a new expansionist drive, and, to secure its northern frontier, a peace treaty was negotiated with the Senones in 334. The peace was short-lived and Celtic attacks became frequent and serious, but the situation was temporarily stabilized when, following a defeat of the Senones in 283, Rome founded a colony on the coast at Sena Gallica on the estuary of the river Misa. The Boii reacted by joining with the Etruscans in a move on Rome, but were defeated and cut to pieces near Lake Vadimone. The peace treaty which the Boii were persuaded to sign with Rome was to last for forty-five years.

After the First Punic War (264–241 BC) Rome's attention turned once more to the north, seen to be Rome's Achilles heel, and in 232 the territory of the Senones was confiscated and made over to Italian settlement. Further Roman activity in the western Apennines alarmed the neighbouring Boii. Strengthened by a large force of Gaesatae—mercenary Celts from beyond the Alps—the Boii, the Insubres, and the Taurisci began a long march on Rome through Etruria. In 225 at Telamon on the Tyrrhenian coast they were caught between two Roman forces. Polybius' account of the battle (*Hist.* 2. 28–3. 10) provides a vivid impression of Celtic warfare. He describes how the Celtic army drew up its ranks to face the attacks coming from two directions, with the wagons and war chariots on both wings and their booty stacked well protected on a nearby hill. The Insubres and Boii wore their breeches and light cloaks, but the Gaesatae fought naked. The Romans were

> terrified by the fine order of the Celtic host and the dreadful din for there were innumerable trumpeters and horn-blowers and … the whole army were shouting their war cries at the same time. Very frightening too were the appearance and gestures of the naked warriors in front, all in the prime of life and finely built men, and all the leading companies richly adorned with gold torcs and armlets.

The Romans, impressed by the sight of the gold, took courage and battle commenced. Eventually Roman might prevailed and the Celtic force was destroyed. Estimates of numbers taking part in ancient battles are notoriously unreliable, but Polybius records that the Celtic force comprised 50,000 infantry and 20,000 horse and chariots. Of these about 40,000 were slain and 10,000 taken prisoner. It was a defeat on a grand scale: thereafter Celtic attacks from the north were much reduced.

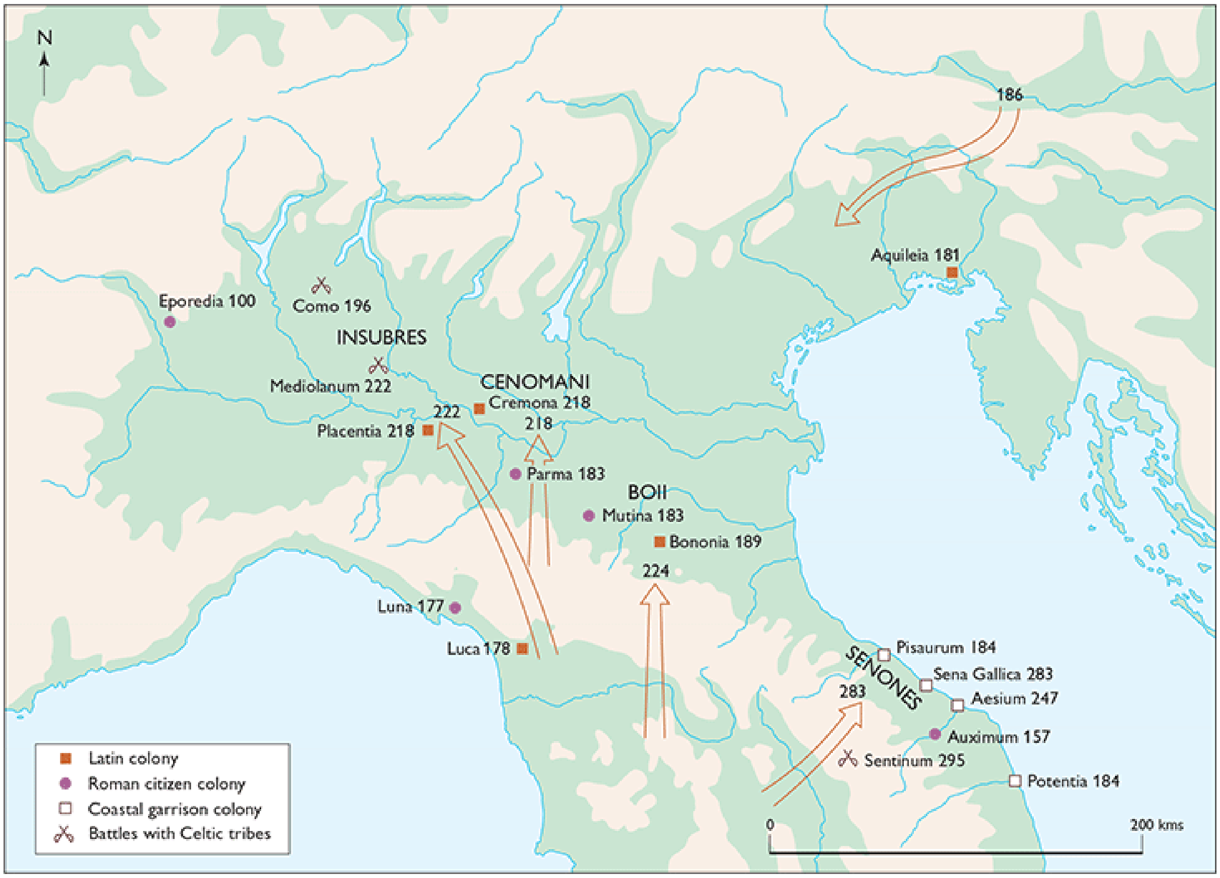
The Roman triumph was quickly followed up with campaigns in Boian territory in 224 BC and among the Insubres in 222. The foundation of two Roman colonies in 218, among those friendly Cenomani who had taken no part in Telamon, marks a tightening of the Roman hold on the Celtic Cisalpine homeland.

After the Second Punic War (218–202), in which Celts had been employed by Hannibal as somewhat ineffective mercenaries, the Roman armies moved quickly to subjugate the Po valley. The Cenomani who had been hostile to Rome made their peace in 197 BC; Como was taken in 196; and in 189 a colony was founded at Bononia (Bologna). As a result of these campaigns, many of the Boii decided to migrate northwards, back into Transalpine Europe. But Celtic migrations *from* the Transalpine region were not entirely at an end, for in 186 a Celtic horde including 12,000 fighting men moved through the Carnic Alps intending to plunder and settle. The Roman army intervened in 183: those Celts who survived the confrontation were forced to return home. While not a major event in itself, it was a reminder to the Romans that history might repeat itself and that the only sure defence was the thorough Italianization of Cisalpine Gaul.

The Danube Corridor in the Fifth and Fourth Centuries

The valley of the river Danube provided the principal corridor of communication between west central Europe and the east. At two points the valley is constricted by the proximity of mountain ranges. In the west, in the vicinity of modern Bratislava, the western Carpathians on the north and the Alpine Burgenland on the south create a comparatively narrow gap, but east of this the landscape opens up into the Carpathian basin, roughly equivalent to present-day Hungary and parts of Serbia, with the hilly countryside of Transdanubia to the west of the river and the flatter

Great Hungarian Plain to the east. The eastern extremity of this huge and desirable territory is closed by the eastern Carpathian mountains except where the river Danube has cut a deep gorge—the Iron Gates—now the border between Serbia and Romania. Culturally the Carpathian basin divides into two: the western zone from the Danube to the eastern fringes of the Alps was occupied by communities sharing in the generalized Hallstatt culture, while to the east, the Great Hungarian Plain was to become the home to the distinctive Vekerzug group, closely related to the horse-riding Scythians of the east. It was into this huge Middle Danube territory that the Celtic tribes migrated.


N
186
Aquileia 181
Eporedia 100
Como 196
INSUBRES
Mediolanum 222
CENOMANI
Cremona 218
222
218
Placentia 218
Parma 183
BOII
Mutina 183
Bononia 189
224
Luna 177
Luca 178
SENONES
Pisaurum 184
Sena Gallica 283
283
Aesium 247
Auximum 157
Sentinum 295
Potentia 184
0
200 kms
■ Latin colony
● Roman citizen colony
□ Coastal garrison colony
⚔ Battles with Celtic tribes

6.5 Northern Italy in the second century BC, at the time when the Celts were coming under pressure from the advancing Romans.

The ancient authors, writing about the Celtic expansion, were broadly agreed that some part of the migration of *c.*400 BC moved eastwards. Geography dictates that the principal route used would have been along the Danube corridor giving access to Moravia, Slovakia, and Hungary.

Certainly by 335 BC Celtic groups are historically attested in the Balkans and it is simplest to interpret them as settlers or raiders who had moved through the Middle Danube region, though an alternative view—that they may have been an offshoot of Celts moving eastwards via the Po valley—should not be too readily rejected.

The nature of the Celticization of the Carpathian basin can be approached only through archaeological evidence—primarily the evidence of cemeteries. It is convenient to divide the material culture of the period into two horizons, the Vorduchcov (*c*.400–370/360 BC) and the Duchcov–MÃ¼nsingen (*c*.370/360–300 BC), the latter being typified by distinctive brooch types found in a votive deposit at Duchcov in Bohemia and at a prolific cemetery at MÃ¼nsingen near Berne.

It needs to be stressed at the outset that the movements of Celtic peoples throughout the Transalpine region in the fourth century are likely to have been highly complex, varying from large-scale folk migrations, at the one extreme, to the simple exchange of wives and warriors, at the other. Similarly we must allow that some of the changes recognizable in the archaeological record need be nothing more than the adoption of new styles and new behavioural patterns by indigenous communities. An attempt to give historical meaning to these shades of cultural variation is a hazardous procedure. Having said this, however, certain broad interpretations seem valid.

In Bohemia, for example, following the phase of migration, there are indications of new cultural infiltrations in the first part of the fourth century affecting north-western, central, and eastern areas. A little later, at the end of the Vorduchcov phase, a more significant cultural change is apparent. It is at this time that the hilltop settlement of Závist was destroyed and flat-grave cemeteries, with a new range of grave goods, make a comparatively sudden appearance. Cultural similarities with material found in western Switzerland and Baden-Württemberg are generally taken to imply an immigrant warrior population moving in from the west to take up lands previously vacated by the move of the original Bohemian population to the south. In the Rhineland during the fourth century there is a noticeable reduction in the number of settlements and cemeteries. Some of these populations presumably travelled south into the Po valley, but others may well have joined a general movement to the east to Bohemia and beyond.

The fourth century sees the establishment of Celtic communities across a substantial and diverse territory comprising Moravia, Lower Austria, western Hungary, and south-west Slovakia. The earliest settlements date to the first half of the fourth century, but a second phase, in the latter part of the century, can be distinguished, typified by the flat-grave cemeteries, and characterized by a material culture closely similar to that found in the Bohemia–Bavaria region but with elements reflecting contacts further west in Switzerland, the Middle Rhine, and the Marne. This complex spread of Celtic culture, presumably reflecting successive movements of people, filled up the northern part of Transdanubia and extended to the northern fringes of the Great Hungarian Plain during the fourth century. There is some evidence to suggest that some Celtic settlers reached Transylvania, in the heart of modern Romania.

Standing back from the detail of the Celtic expansion to the east, the general situation developing during the fourth century can be appreciated from Map 20 showing the European-wide spread of various Early La Tène groups dominated by the burial of warriors. It demonstrates, with great clarity, a degree of cultural uniformity brought about in this century of migration, extending from the Marne to Transylvania. Though there are distinct regional variations, it is reasonable to regard this uniformity as a cultural continuum through which ideas and people moved freely.

The Celts in the Balkans and Greece in the Fourth and Third Centuries

Celtic war parties had penetrated the mountains of Illyria by the early fourth century BC and were in conflict with the Ardiaioi of southern Dalmatia in 380. It was, however, the growing power of Macedon under Alexander the Great that occasioned the first recorded contacts between the Celtic and Macedonian leaders when, in 335 BC, Celtic emissaries from the Adriatic region visited the court of Alexander to negotiate a treaty of ‘friendship and hospitality’. Strabo’s famous description of the event is worth repeating in full:

> The king received them kindly and asked them, when drinking, what it was that they most feared, thinking that they would say himself, but they replied they feared nothing except

> that the sky might fall on them, although indeed, they added, they put above everything else the friendship of such a man as he.
>
> (*Geog.* 7. 3. 8)

The record of a second embassy, reported by the Greek historian Arrian, took place in 323 when a group of Celtic leaders visited Alexander, who was then in Babylon. It may well have been on this journey that the wealth of Asia Minor was noted for future reference.

Little is heard of the Celts in Illyria for the next fifty years or so, but the fragmentation of Alexander's empire after his death, and the dissipation of the energy of the Macedonians in the political turmoil which followed, so weakened Macedonia and its Greek outpost that the south-east Balkans must have begun to look like an attractive prospect to the more energetic of the Celtic leaders based in Illyria and southern Pannonia. In 298 BC a force had ventured into Macedonia and Thrace under the war leader Cimbaules, but it met substantial resistance. In 280 another thrust was made, this time by Bolgios leading a Celtic and Thracian force: the leader of the Macedonians was killed and his head paraded on a Celtic spear.

Whether or not these were exploratory expeditions designed to pave the way for the massive folk movement which was to follow or were skirmishes caused by a build-up of population in the Celtic homeland in southern Pannonia is impossible to judge. One further possibility which has to be borne in mind is that the Romans were at this time moving against the Senones on the Adriatic coast of Italy, winning two decisive battles in 295 and 283. The disruption caused by the Roman aggression may well have encouraged groups of Celts from the Po valley to move eastwards through Slovenia to seek new land, swelling the numbers of dislocated warriors.

Matters seem to have come to a head in 279 BC. In the previous year, while Bolgios was involved in Macedonia, some Celtic groups, led by Kerethrios, had been operating in Thrace and others under Brennos and Achichorios were in Paeonia. Bolgios' victory over the Macedonian army opened the way for a more concerted thrust to the south-east.

The onslaught was headed by Brennos moving southwards from central Bulgaria. An account of what followed was provided by Pausanias, a second-century AD writer who seems to have made use of an earlier, now lost, history compiled by Hieronymus of Cardia. Allowing for the potential inaccuracies and bias of the sources, the main events are tolerably clear. The lure, says Pausanias, was the ‘wealth of the Greek states and the even greater wealth in the sanctuaries including votive offerings and coined silver and gold’. This is not an unreasonable assumption, but his estimate of the size of the Celtic force—152,000 infantry and 20,400 horse—is likely to be an exaggeration.

At an early stage in the advance there was discord, and, according to Livy, some 20,000 men led by Leonorios and Lutorios moved off on their own, eventually settling in Asia Minor. The remainder under Brennos and Achichorios first suffered heavy losses against a Macedonian force before continuing southwards to enter Greece through the pass of Thermopylae. Thermopylae was well defended by the Greeks, but, by splitting forces in an outflanking movement, the Celts overcame the opposition, though not without considerable losses. Not pausing for the troops commanded by Achichorios to join him, or even to bury his own dead, Brennos pushed on towards Delphi. What actually happened then is unclear. One tradition records that the sanctuary was pillaged, some of the treasure obtained eventually ending up in the sacred enclosures of the Volcae Tectosages at Tolosa (Toulouse), where it was appropriated by the Roman commander Caepio in 106 BC. According to the Greek tradition, on the other hand, the presiding deity, Apollo, came to the defence of the sanctuary. Thunder and lightning accompanied by earthquakes caused rocks to roll down from the heights onto the discouraged Celts, while the Phokaians, used to the stark and sudden nature of the countryside, employed guerrilla tactics in attacking the Celtic rear. It may have been these events, combined perhaps with news that a large part of the force led by Achichorios had been left to guard baggage and spoil at Heraclea, while the remainder had been attacked by the Aetolians and Phokaians who had captured their supplies, that thoroughly disheartened the forces of Brennos. In the event, after the wounded had been put to death, the retreat began. In the night of panic which followed, fighting broke out among the Celts and the next day constant Phokaian sniping prevented the forage parties from collecting the necessary food.

Eventually the two Celtic armies were reunited, but such was the effectiveness of the growing Greek opposition that Brennos, who had been wounded, succumbed to the despair of a failed leader and committed suicide, either by drinking undiluted wine or by some other means when drunk (depending upon the source). The remaining force retreated through Spercheios, where Thessalians and Malians were waiting to fall on them in retribution for the brutalities which the Celts had inflicted on the local population on their way south to Delphi. The depletion of the Celtic force must have been considerable, but it was surely an exaggeration of Pausanias to say that hardly one escaped safely from Greece.

The thrust into Greece and the subsequent retreat probably took place within the single year 279 BC. It seems to have been no more than a raid designed to obtain treasure. What distinguishes the attack on Delphi is that the Celts had chosen to move against a literate people who could record events and present them according to their own concepts of history. Thus the event survives as a story of great brutality and heroism. While a notable episode in the history of the Celtic expansion, it may have been no more significant than many such events for which no written records exist. It is a sobering fact that, had we to rely entirely on the archaeological evidence, no trace of the advances and retreats of 279 would have been suspected (Map 21).

Whatever the effectiveness or otherwise of the raid in gaining spoils, the event was celebrated at Delphi by a regular four-yearly festival of salvation, the *Soteria*.

In the immediate aftermath some part of the Celtic force seems to have moved back northwards to the Middle Danube valley, contributing to the large tribal complex which gelled there to become the Scordisci. Others, according to Polybius, moved eastwards through Thrace and carved out for themselves a territory around Tyle (Tylis), which became the capital. Here they were well placed to demand, and receive, regular protection money from Byzantium until the enclave was eventually annihilated by the Thracians *c.*212 BC. Another band under Kerethrios was defeated by Antigonos Gonatas in 278–277 at Lysimachia. Of the rest, many will have stayed in Greece and Macedonia to serve as mercenaries, where there was ample employment to be had. Some were active in the army of Antigonos in 274, and their shields were among the trophies of victory dedicated in the temple of Athena Itomia near Larissa following Antigonos’ defeat by Pyrrhus. Another, very considerable force was invited to cross the Hellespont into Asia Minor to fight in the army of Nicomedes of Bithynia in 278. Their passage opens up a new chapter in Celtic history.

The Celts in Asia Minor, Third Century BC to Fourth Century AD

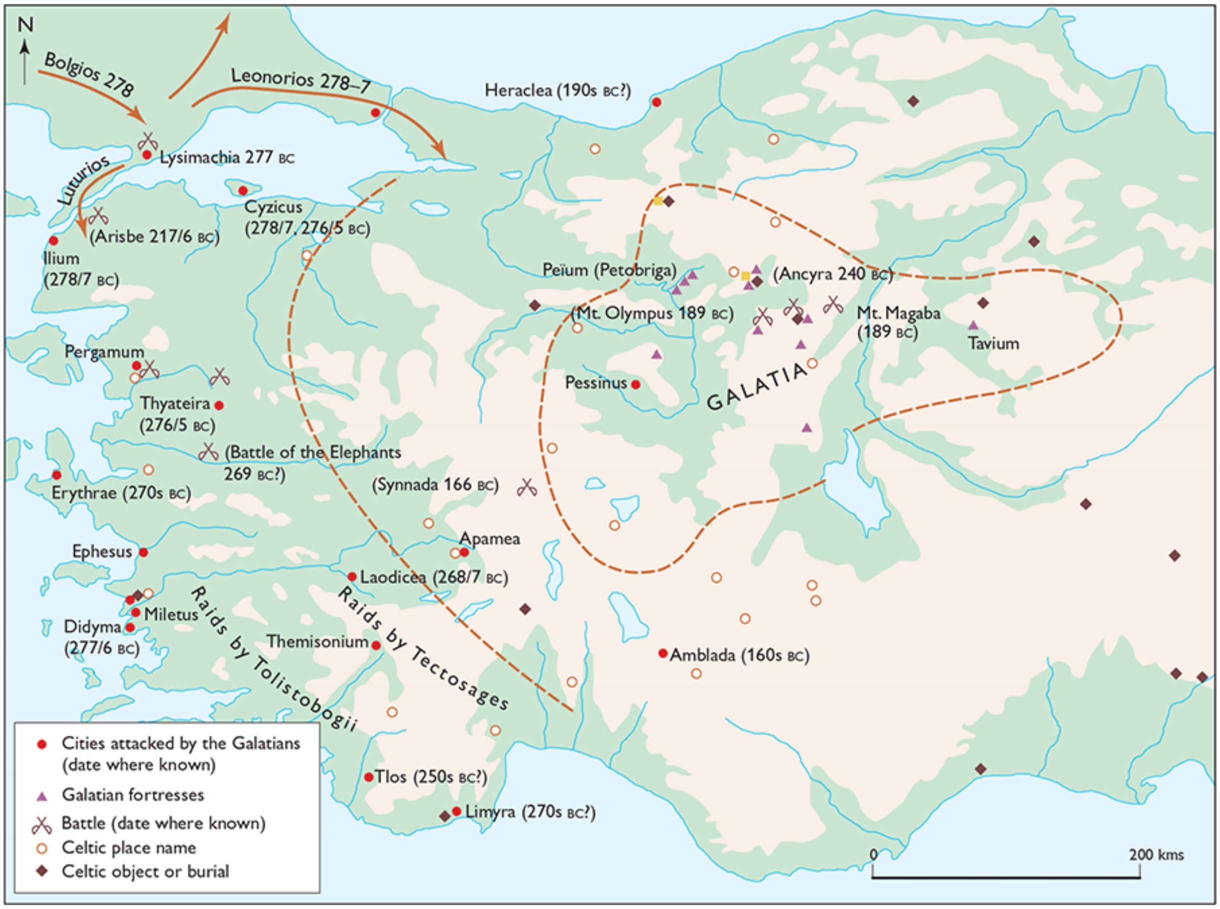
The Celts who crossed the narrow strip of water between Europe and Asia were a varied group comprising three separate tribes, the Tolistobogii, the Tectosages, and the Trocmi. They had separated from the main force which attacked Delphi and were led by Leonorios and Lutorios. What is particularly interesting is that half their total number of 20,000 were non-combatants—the women, the children, and the aged. This suggests that, unlike the warriors who chose to follow Brennos on his raid, the groups who stayed with Leonorios and Lutorios were migrant populations in search of new land to settle.

In Asia Minor the various Celtic groups were referred to collectively as Galatians and their history was recorded in the lost books of Demetrios of Byzantium, which probably served as the source used by Polybius and Livy. Nicomedes employed the Celts in his conflict with Antiochos I, settling them in disputed territory between his own kingdom of Bithynia and that ruled by Antiochos. The period of instability which followed culminated in the defeat of the Celts in 275–274 BC in the famous ‘Elephant Battle’ in which Antiochos used elephants to overwhelm his enemy. Thereafter the Celts were moved to a barren highland area flanking the Halys. From here, for the next forty-five years or so, they became a scourge to the surrounding cities, organizing frequent raids from their home base particularly against the rich Hellenized cities, where plunder or bribes could easily be had. According to Livy, each of the three Galatian tribes had their own territory to raid: the Tolistobogii raided Aeolis, the Trocmi focused on the Hellespont, while the Tectosages regarded inland Asia Minor as their sphere of activity. Eventually an alliance with Mithridates I of Pontus encouraged them to move to a new land around Ancyra (Ankara).

From the middle of the third century the Celtic raids against the cities of the Aegean coastal area began to intensify, and Eumenes I of Pergamum (263–241 BC), now the prime power in the west, decided to buy them off. His successor, Attalus I (241–197 BC), however, chose instead to stand his ground, eventually winning a decisive battle at the Springs of Kaikos about 233 BC. It was to celebrate this victory that a monument was erected on the acropolis of Pergamum, some statues of which survive in Roman copies, the most famous being the Dying Gaul (above, p. 8).

In the latter part of the third century Celts were used extensively as mercenaries in the armies of the Seleucid and Ptolemaic rulers, though from the fragmentary accounts that survive they appear to have been unruly and somewhat unreliable. One group who became demoralized at an eclipse of the moon had to be sent back with their wives and children to the Hellespont in case they had decided to change sides. The incident is interesting, because it shows that fresh groups of mercenaries were still arriving from Europe. It was during this period that Celtic warriors were in action as far afield as Egypt. In 218 Attalus II employed a Celtic tribe from Europe, the Aigosages, to take part in his campaigns in Aeolis and Phrygia, and afterwards gave them land on the borders of Phrygia, from where, at their own initiative, they began to carry out extensive raids until the entire tribe was slaughtered by Prusias of Bithynia in 217.

In 191 BC the Romans were drawn into the political turmoil of Asia Minor as allies of Pergamum against the Seleucid king Antiochos III. At Magnesia, in 190, the Seleucid army, together with its Galatian mercenaries, was soundly defeated by a combined Roman and Pergamene force, and the next year the new Roman commander Cn. Manlius Vulso set out for central Anatolia to deal with the Galatians in their home territory. In preparation for the onslaught the Tolistobogii and the fighting men of the Trocmi rallied at Mount Olympus, three days' travel west of Ancyra, while the Tectosages and the families of the Trocmi made for Mount Magaba just east of Ancyra. In a lightning strike Manlius defeated first the Tolistobogii and the Trocmi, selling those he captured—40,000 men, women, and children—as slaves. He then moved quickly on to defeat the Tectosages. In the peace which was concluded, the Galatians agreed to stop all raids in the western parts of Asia Minor. Apart from an abortive attempt by Ortiagon, the Tolistobogian chief, to unite Galatia in a war on Pergamum, comparative peace prevailed, the Romans ensuring that the Galatians remained free from Pergamene control. However, in 167 the Galatian attacks began again and Eumenes II was forced to engage in vigorous campaigns against them. Two years later a new peace treaty was agreed.


N
Bolgios 278
Leonorios 278–7
Lutarios
Lysimachia 277 BC
Heraclea (190s BC?)
Cyzicus
(278/7, 276/5 BC)
(Arisbe 217/6 BC)
Ilium
(278/7 BC)
Peïum (Petobriga)
(Ancyra 240 BC)
(Mt. Olympus 189 BC)
Mt. Magaba
(189 BC)
Tavium
Pessinus
GALATIA
Pergamum
Thyateira
(276/5 BC)
(Battle of the Elephants
269 BC?)
(Synnada 166 BC)
Erythrae (270s BC)
Apamea
Ephesus
Laodicea (268/7 BC)
Miletus
Didyma
(277/6 BC)
Raids by Tolistobogii
Themisonium
Raids by Tectosages
Amblada (160s BC)
Tlos (250s BC?)
Limyra (270s BC?)
● Cities attacked by the Galatians (date where known)
▲ Galatian fortresses
✕ Battle (date where known)
○ Celtic place name
◆ Celtic object or burial
0
200 kms

6.6 The Celts in Asia Minor, showing the principal areas of settlement and the sites of the major conflicts.

The Pergamene victory was widely celebrated. At Pergamum a great sculptured frieze was added to the altar of Zeus, while on the Athenian acropolis a victory monument was dedicated by the Pergamenes proclaiming, in sculptured allegory, that the rulers of Pergamum, like the Greeks, were the saviours of the civilized world (see pp. 6–9).

Thereafter raiding, so necessary for the maintenance of Celtic society, was deflected away from the territory controlled by the western powers towards other states. Cappadocia was first to suffer and later Pontus, but gradually the Celtic communities—known universally as the Galatians—absorbed the ways of Greece and Rome and of their Asiatic neighbours. When, in the middle of the first century AD, the Christian apostle Paul wrote his letter to the Galatians, he treated them no differently from any other community in the now Roman world.

A sense of ethnic identity, perhaps earlier fostered by the practice of raiding, is implied by the widespread use of the name ‘Galatian’, which reflects the deep-rooted strength of Celtic traditions. An even more impressive reminder of this is the persistence of their language. When, in the fourth century AD, St Jerome offered the observation that the language used by the Galatians around Ancyra was similar to that he had heard among the Treveri at Trier, he was recognizing, though perhaps with the hindsight of a historian, the Celtic ancestry of both people.

The North Pontic Regions in the Fourth and Third Centuries

The north Pontic region, lying both east and west of the Sea of Azov in the basin of the Kuban river, has yielded an array of artefacts which can be regarded as Celtic. Celtic-style weapons, such as shields and anthropomorphic-hilted swords, are also depicted on coins minted in the Bosporus in the second half of the third century (Map 22). Also relevant are a number of Etruscan helmets found in Sarmatian graves, the manufacture of which can be dated to before the middle of the third century. Other finds include a La Tène iron sword from Neapolis, a Celtic helmet from Boiko-Ponura in the Krasnodar region, which has close similarities to helmets from Slovenia, and horse gear of Bohemian type from a grave at Marjevka.

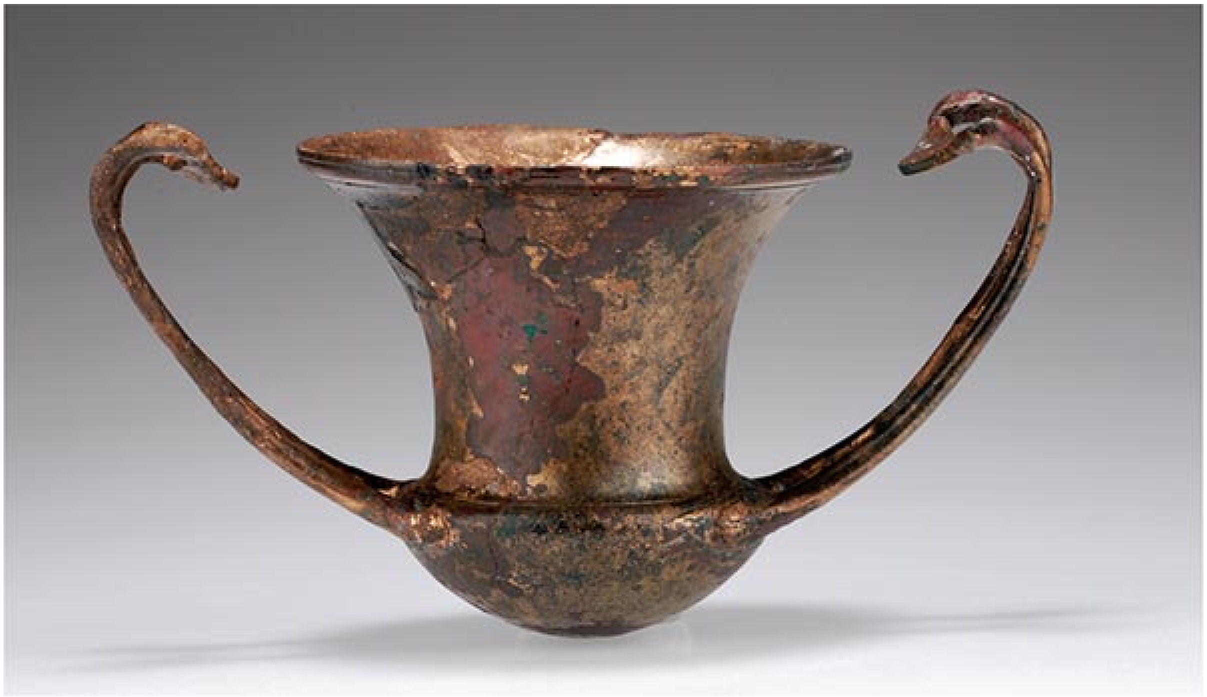
To suggest a historical context for these finds presents some difficulties. One possibility is that some of the items were introduced by the Celtic mercenaries from Asia Minor who are recorded to have served in the campaigns of Mithridates VI around the northern shores of the Black Sea in 63 BC, but many of the finds are significantly earlier and require a different explanation. It is possible, therefore, that they reflect a separate incursion from the Balkans or from Transylvania at the height of the migrations.

European Celts in the Third and Second Centuries

In the aftermath of the Celtic expulsion from Greece there appears to have been a period of some turmoil among the Celtic communities roaming south-eastern Europe. Historical sources are few and vague. One thread which can be distinguished suggests that a returning group led by Bathanatos finally settled in the Middle Danube region at the confluence of the Sava, Drava, and Danube, whence they had originally come, creating an extensive confederation, thereafter known as the Scordisci; they formed the southernmost extremity of what can be regarded as the settled core of Celtic Europe. Over succeeding centuries the Scordisci were responsible for intermittent raiding against neighbouring Macedonia and Greece.

To the north of the Scordisci, in Transdanubia and the Great Hungarian Plain, the third century BC saw a steady increase in the number and density of La Tène settlements and cemeteries resulting from the arrival of Celts from the north as well as groups returning from the south-east. It is tempting to see the Greek bronze kantharos found at Szob in Hungary, which has its closest parallels to one found at Galaxidi near Delphi, as a trophy brought back from the campaigns. The tribal configuration is not clear but much of Transdanubia was in the hands of the Taurisci. The Volcae Tectosages are also mentioned and it is possible that the Boii were establishing some enclaves in the north.

In the Great Hungarian Plain the burials of the native Sigynnae continued until the mid-third century, but thereafter La Tène influence becomes more apparent, possibly as a result of the settlement of infiltrating Celtic groups, and it is in this period that some of the La Tène cemeteries extending from the Hungarian border into Transylvania began to develop. Taken together, the archaeological evidence suggests that the broad swathe of territory stretching from the eastern fringes of the Alps to Transylvania was rapidly becoming Celticized. It was in this zone that the classic La Tène styles and the artistic concepts of indigenous peoples rooted in an eastern tradition of animal art interacted to create an eastern La Tène art distinct from that evolving in the west.

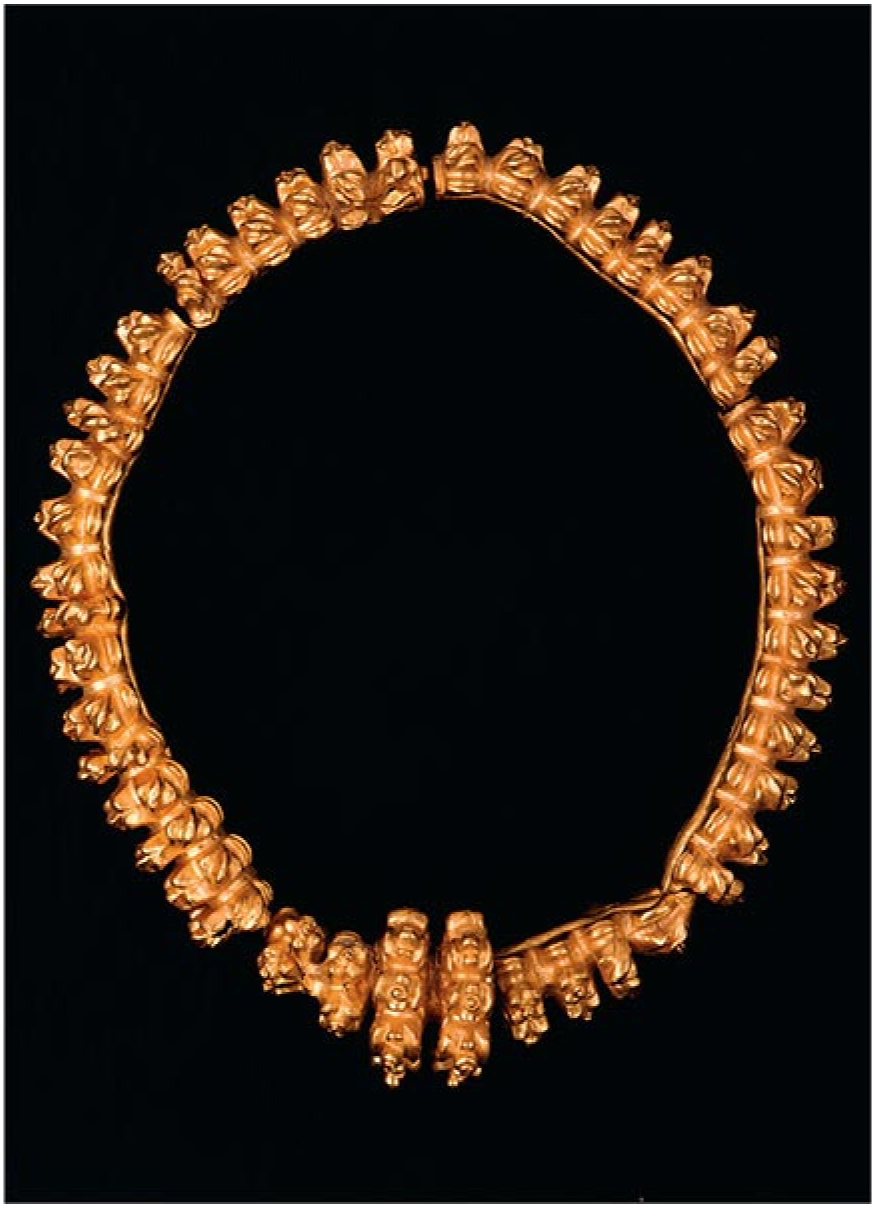


6.7 Greek bronze kantharos of the late fourth century BC found at Szob, Pest, Hungary. It is very similar to vessels found in the vicinity of Delphi and may possibly have been among the spoils from the attack on the sanctuary. Magyar Nemzeti Múzeum, Budapest.

The distribution of La Tène material extends northward from the Sudeten mountains into southern Poland, suggesting that migrant populations may have moved northwards from northern Bohemia in the late fourth and early third centuries to settle in Lower Silesia in the present region of Wrocław, Oława, and Strzelin, where cemeteries, presumably indicating the distribution of settlements, are found occupying the most fertile lands. In Upper Silesia, in the valleys of the rivers Cyna and Troja, the initial La Tène settlement is a little later, dating to the second half of the third century, and may have resulted from the movement of peoples from Moravia. Both communities were ideally located to command trade in desirable commodities, such as amber, furs, wax, salt, and graphite, acquired from the north European zone for exchange with the communities of the south, where such materials were in demand.

The possibility that some Celtic groups from the Balkans may have moved westwards through Europe and settled in the west is suggested by archaeological and literary evidence. In the Marne region, for example, a new range of warrior burials accompanied by well-furnished female graves makes a sudden appearance towards the middle of the third century. New cemeteries were established; old burial sites were reused; and land long abandoned was reoccupied. The implication is that new Celtic groups had moved into the Champagne region to augment the thinly scattered indigenous Celtic population. That these new settlers may have come from the Carpathian basin is suggested by similarities in dress between the two areas, in particular the use of anklets by women, and by the prevalence of small funerary enclosures of eastern type which now appear for the first time.

In southern Gaul there is also evidence suggestive of an influx of new people from the Danube region. The southern Gaulish historian Pompeius Trogus, quoted by Justinus, records that a number of the Tectosages who were involved in the retreat from Greece moved west, eventually to settle in the vicinity of Toulouse, bringing with them treasure from the sack of Delphi, which they deposited in sacred lakes. When, in 106 BC, Caepio was sent in charge of a Roman force to put down a revolt among the Volcae and Tectosages, he had the lakes drained and the treasure seized with the intention of keeping it for himself. The later disasters that befell him were believed by Strabo and Justinus to have been the result of Apollo’s wrath, the god angered that the sacred treasures of Delphi were again disturbed.



6.8 (*Above*) Gold torc from Fenouillet, Haute-Garonne, France. Third century BC. The elaborate style of decoration, typical of torcs from south-western France, may have been introduced from the Middle Danube region, perhaps by migrating bands. MusÃ©e Saint-Raymond, Toulouse.

Some potential archaeological confirmation for this suggested influx is to be found in the sudden appearance of La Tène material in the Languedoc region and in the Garonne valley. From the early third century a high percentage of the burials around the hilltop settlement of EnsÃ©rune, near BÃ©ziers, contain Celtic warrior gear, including swords, spears, chain mail, and shields. Although some La Tène material is found in earlier contexts, this sudden appearance of warrior panoply may indicate more than just trade. Further west in the Garonne valley, in the general region of Toulouse, highly decorated gold torcs and armlets made their appearance in the third century, many being deposited in hoards such as those at Fenouillet and LasgraÃ¯sses. Stylistically they can be compared to items found in the Danube region. Although the quantity found suggests local manufacture, the strong possibility is that they were made by migrant craftsmen coming from the east.

The third century was evidently a time of great mobility in Celtic Europe when coherent groups of people moved vast distances and were frequently able to maintain their ethnic identity. The extent of flux and ferment is only dimly recognizable in the works of the ancient historians, while the archaeological evidence, as is so often the case, is ambiguous and open to a variety of interpretations. Yet the huge sweeps of territory over which a distinctive La Tène culture spread in the third century, together with the similarity of artistic style and behaviour represented in grave goods and burial practice, are a dramatic demonstration of a fluidity of ideas caused in no small part by a highly mobile population.

6.9 (*Opposite*) Gold torc from Gajicˇ, Vojvodina, Croatia. Third century BC. The style is very similar to those found in south-western France. Magyar Nemzeti Múzeum, Budapest.

The Mechanisms of Movement

To understand the nature of the motivation behind this remarkable phase of migration, it is necessary to return to the phenomenon of the raid. For a Celt to enhance his status, it was necessary to demonstrate an ability to lead a band of followers and thus to create the opportunity for both acts of valour and the acquisition of booty, which could be distributed in displays of largesse. We have seen how the socio-economic system at the end of the Hallstatt period presented a situation in which the raid could develop, but in all probability it was endemic throughout Europe over a long period, rising to prominence from time to time as conditions demanded. Late Bronze Age Greece, manifest in Mycenaean culture and reflected in the Homeric literature, provides one such example.

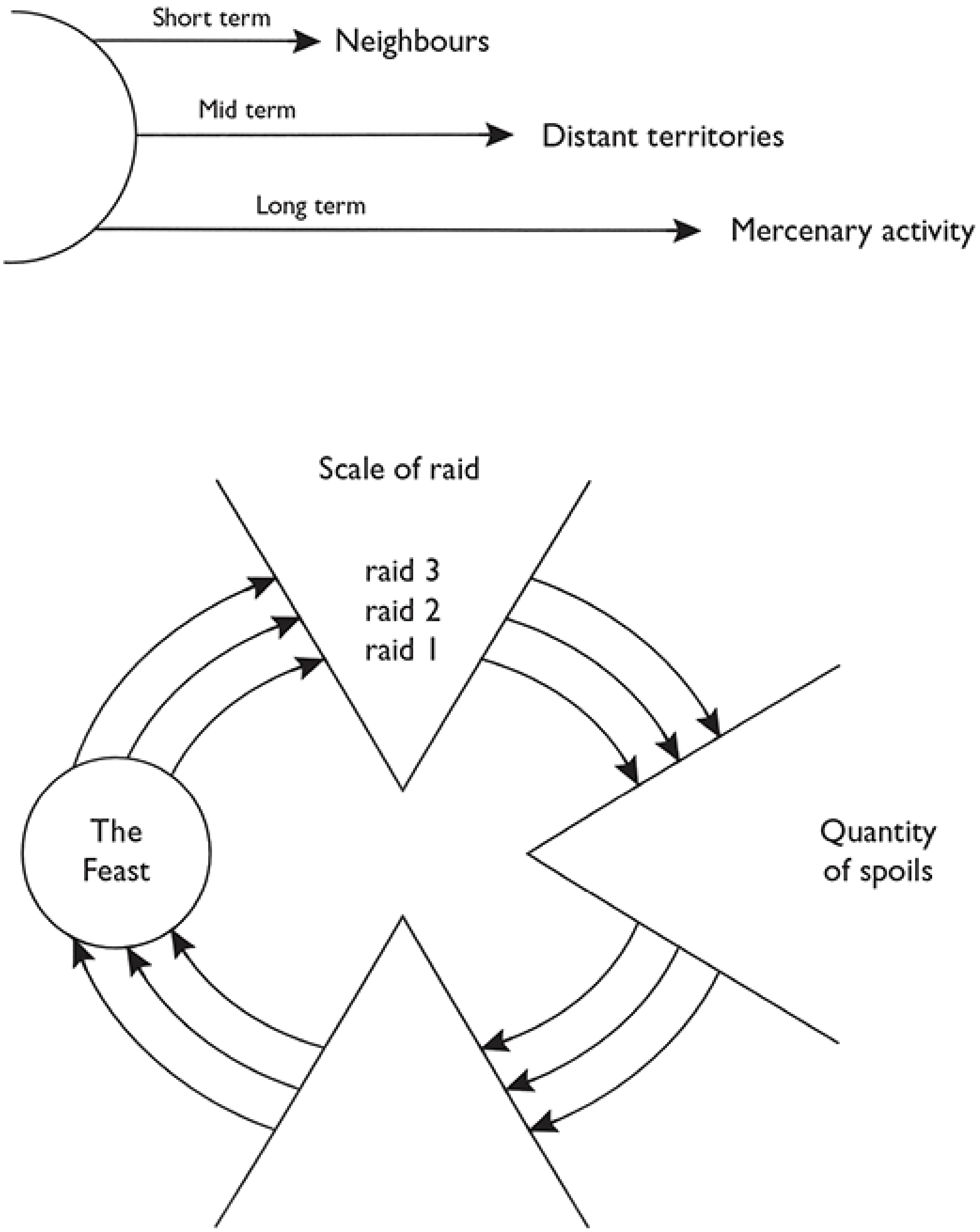
Once the raid had become an established part of the social system, the imperative to raid intensified. A successful raid generating spoils to distribute would have enhanced the reputation of the leader, thereby encouraging more followers to join him. His next raid had to be more ambitious to satisfy everyone's expectations. Younger men aspiring to power would then compete with expeditions of their own, and so the violence escalated. Once in motion it is easy to see how the system would grow and once-limited raids on neighbouring tribes would give way to more adventurous expeditions lasting for much longer periods, until raiding bands might expect to be away from home for months at a time. The ultimate development of such a trajectory would be the mercenary band, its leader being prepared to serve in the cause of a patron of high status. The imperative to raid became central to the maintenance of Celtic social order. It is against this background that the long periods of raiding—from Cisalpine Gaul into Italy, from the Middle Danube into Macedonia and Greece, and from central Anatolia to the Aegean coasts—must be seen.

The mobility embedded in the system encouraged entire populations to move on those occasions when the territory became too constricted either for the population to grow or to provide suitable marcher zones for small-scale military activity. The situation is vividly demonstrated in one of the last and most fully documented migrations, that of the Helvetii in 59 and 58 BC. Although we see the situation develop only in the words which Julius Caesar chooses to provide (*De Bello Gallico* 1), his account contains a ring of truth. The Helvetii lived in Switzerland hemmed in by mountains and the Rhine.

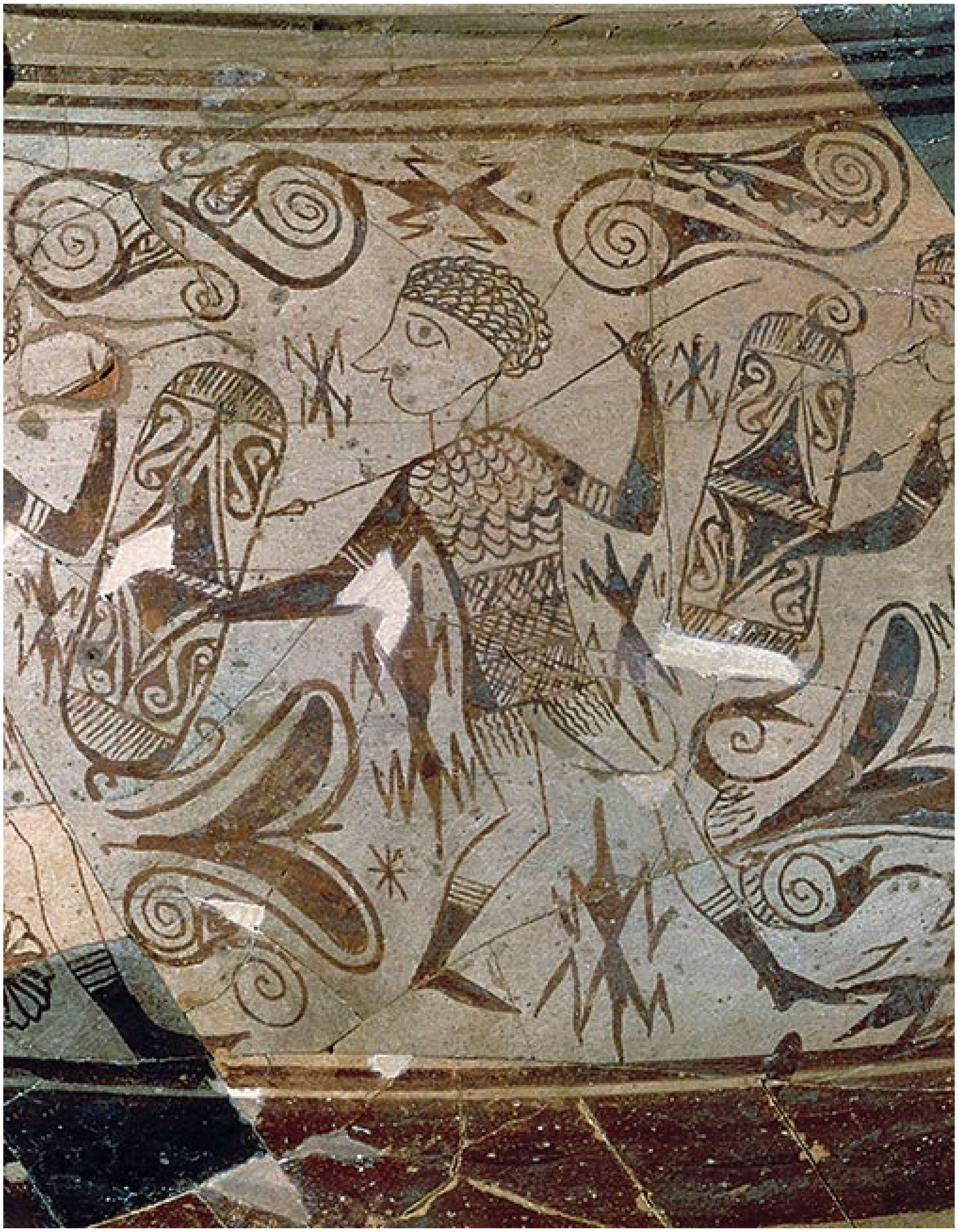
> These geographical features meant that they could not range over a wide area and had greater difficulty in making war on neighbouring tribes. Since the Helvetii enjoyed fighting, they bitterly resented the restrictions. They considered that the territory they had did not match the size of their population or its reputation for bravery in war: it was too small.
>
> (*De Bello Gallico* 1. 2)

Caesar goes on to describe the preparations for migration, the buying of draught animals and wagons, the sowing of as much land as possible to provide food for the journey, and the establishment of diplomatic relations with neighbours through whose territories they wished to travel. ‘They thought two years would be enough for completing their preparations and passed a law declaring that they would set out on the third.’ When they were ready to start the migration, they set fire to their twelve *oppida* and 400 villages as well as the surplus grain to prevent any possibility of return and, with several like-minded neighbouring tribes, they set off for a new territory on the Atlantic coast of Gaul.

Their march was intercepted by Caesar, who, with massive force, stopped the advance and drove the remnants to return home, except for the Boii, who were invited to settle in the territory of the Aedui. Caesar claims to have found documents in the Helvetian camp listing, in Greek, the migrants, distinguishing them by tribe and by gender and age. In total there were 368,000: 263,000 Helvetii, 36,000 Tulingi, 14,000 Latovici, 23,000 Raurici, and 32,000 Boii. Of these 92,000 were armed. After the battle those forced to return numbered only 110,000. How reliable these figures are will remain unknown, but at the very least Caesar’s account gives some idea of the reasons, magnitude, and organization of a Celtic folk movement.


Short term
Neighbours
Mid term
Distant territories
Long term
Mercenary activity
Scale of raid
raid 3
raid 2
raid 1
The Feast
Quantity of spoils

6.10 The raid. A diagram to illustrate the dynamics of the raid as an integral part of the Celtic social system. Competitive emulation among aspiring leaders will have created a situation in which raiding might escalate. Mercenary activity and migration are extreme manifestations of the same system.



7

The Communities of the Atlantic Façade

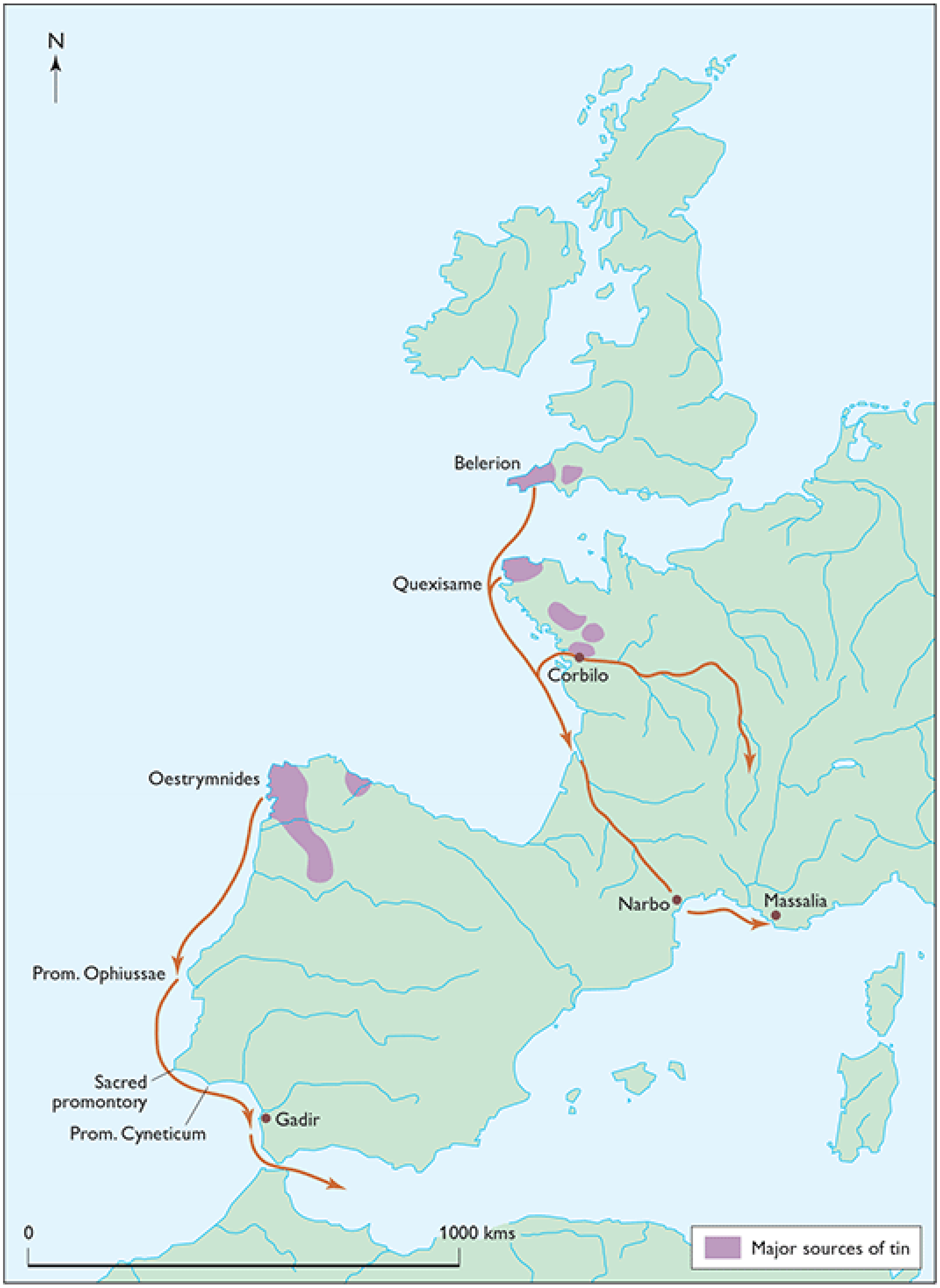
THE frenetic mobility which gripped much of Europe in the second half of the first millennium, especially the interaction of the Greek and Roman world with their northern neighbours, the Celts, is well recorded in contemporary texts and is given a visible reality by a wealth of archaeological evidence. The fourth to second centuries BC were a time of large-scale folk movement which involved Celtic tribes moving from their west central European homelands southwards into the Po valley and the Italian peninsula and eastwards through central Europe to Greece and the Balkans, with some reaching Asia Minor. Inevitably the classical sources emphasize the folk movements which directly affected their own interests but this does not mean that other movements to the west did not occur. Indeed, Chapter 1 has described how it was believed for a long time that mass folk movements from west central Europe, at sometime in the period 1000–250 BC, introduced Celtic culture and language to Iberia, western France, Britain, and Ireland. Whether it involved one or many incursions and at what dates the supposed incoming(s) took place were hotly debated. Not until the 1960s did archaeologists begin to argue that the evidence failed to support these migrationist hypotheses and they were widely rejected. Yet the first millennium BC was a period of intense mobility and it would be surprising if it had not impacted in some way on the Atlantic zone, albeit in the form of small-scale movements of families or simply of enhanced mobility involving wandering craftsmen and traders.

The Beginning of Mediterranean Interest in the Far West

In Chapter 2 we saw that the Phoenicians began to develop a commercial interest in the Atlantic coast of Iberia as early as the tenth century and this was to last well into Carthaginian times. These entrepreneurs were spurred on by a desire to acquire various kinds of metal: copper, gold, and tin extracted from the rich pyrite zone of western Iberia. The *Ora Maritima* (above, p. 75) refers to this trade, describing its centre as the Oestrymnides, islands 'rich in the mining of tin and lead. A vigorous tribe lives here, proud-spirited, energetic and skilful. On all the ridges trade is carried on.' The account goes on to mention the use of native boats made of leather hides sewn together. The exact location of the Oestrymnides has been much discussed but it would seem simplest to equate the region with the ria coastline of Galicia in north-west Iberia in the vicinity of which tin occurs in abundance. If this reading of the *Ora Maritima* is correct, there is no reason to suppose the Phoenicians penetrated further north than Galicia—an observation strongly supported by the archaeological evidence.

Sometime in the fifth century a Carthaginian, Himilco, explored the Atlantic 'out from Europe'. There is no record of his itinerary but it is possible that the months spent at sea were in an attempt to cross the Atlantic. The developing Carthaginian involvement in southern Iberia and the Atlantic discouraged Greek ships' masters from sailing through the Strait of Gibraltar to reach the Iberian metal resources. But tin was much in demand and had to be sourced. This may have been the economic imperative that drove the Massiliot explorer Pytheas to make his epic journey to the northern part of the Atlantic zone about 320 BC—a venture described in his *On the Ocean*. The work no longer survives but was quoted by his contemporaries and by later writers, providing some indication of the route he took. The simplest reconstruction of his itinerary is that he followed the long-established trade route from the Mediterranean via the river Aude, then crossing inland to the upper reaches of the Garonne and thereafter keeping to the river until he reached the Gironde estuary. There he picked up the first of many local boats for his journey north, visiting Brittany and south-west Britain before circumnavigating the island. It is even possible that he visited the amber-producing shores of Jutland and perhaps even Iceland before retracing his steps home.

Pytheas’ first stop in Britain was probably Belerion—the Land’s End peninsula—and it was here that he visited the tin market held on the offshore island of Ictis. Scraps of the story are recorded much later by Pliny (quoting the Sicilian historian Timaeus, who was a contemporary of Pytheas and used his work extensively). Pliny refers to the Britons’ use of boats of wickerwork covered with hide to transport the tin. A further description is preserved by Diodorus Siculus, whose ultimate source may also have been Pytheas:


N
Belerion
Quexisame
Corbilo
Oestrymnides
Narbo
Massalia
Prom. Ophiussae
Sacred promontory
Prom. Cyneticum
Gadir
0
1000 kms
Major sources of tin

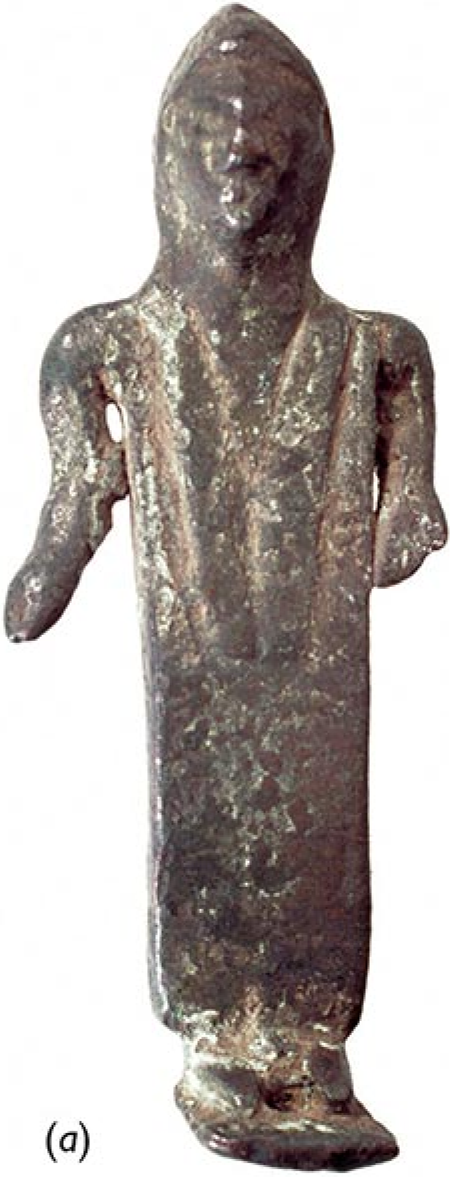
7.1 By the fourth century BC the Mediterranean states had developed trade routes to the Atlantic to acquire tin. The Phoenicians and Carthaginians exploited Galician tin, while the Massiliot Greeks used the cross-peninsular route to access the tin resources of Armorica and south-western Britain.

> The inhabitants of Britain who live on the promontory called Belerion are especially friendly to strangers and have adopted a civilized way of life because of their interaction with traders and other people. It is they who work the tin, treating the layer which contains it in an ingenious way. This layer, being like rock, contains earthy seams and in them the workers quarry the ore which they then melt down to clean from its impurities. Then they work the tin into pieces the size of knuckle-bones and convey it to an island which lies off Britain, called Ictis; for at the ebb-time the space between this island and the mainland becomes dry and they can take the tin in large quantities over to the island on their wagons. (And a peculiar thing happens in the case of the neighbouring islands which lie between Europe and Britain, for at flood-tide the passage between them and the mainland runs full and they have the appearance of islands, but at ebb-tide the sea recedes and leaves dry a large space and at that time they look like peninsulas.) On the island of Ictis the merchants buy the tin from the natives and carry it from there across the Strait of Galatia [the Channel] and finally making their way on foot through Gaul for some thirty days, they bring the goods on horseback to the mouth of the Rhône.
>
> (*Hist.* 5. 1–4)

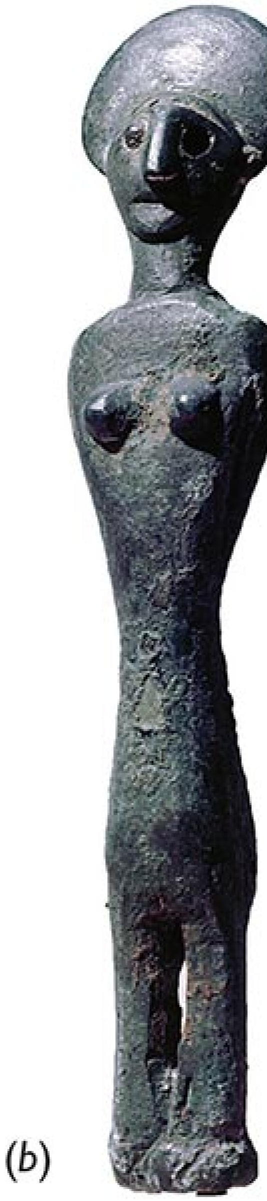
It is not immediately clear which route was being used but the general assumption is that the tin was shipped either to the mouth of the Loire, where the port of Corbilo was said to be located, or to the Garonne. Both estuaries, Strabo tells us, were ports of embarkation frequently used for journeys to Britain.

The tin trade described by the ancient sources is simply a development of the long-established Atlantic exchange network but specifically geared to supply the needs of the Greek communities in the Mediterranean. There is little direct archaeological trace of it but some of a scatter of Greek coins found in western France and Britain may have arrived at this time. The extent and vitality of the broader Atlantic network is reflected in the distribution of other artefacts. Two small bronze figurines, one from Sligo in Ireland, the other from Aust in the Severn estuary, may have been imports emanating ultimately from southern Iberia, while fibulae from Mount Batten in Devon and Harlyn Bay in Cornwall display a close similarity to types manufactured in Aquitania and the Garonne estuary region.

By the fourth century BC, then, the Mediterranean states had insinuated themselves into the Atlantic networks. While the Phoenician world acquired its metals, especially the all-important tin, from Galicia by sea via the Strait of Gibraltar, the Greek world got its supplies by a combination of sea and overland haulage from the metal-rich zone of southern Ireland, Cornwall, and Brittany.



7.2*a* Small bronze figure identified as coming ‘from Sligo’ in Ireland, considered to be an import from Iberia dating to the fourth to first centuries BC. National Museum of Ireland, Dublin.



7.2*b* Small bronze figure found at Aust, Gloucestershire, England. The style of the figure is Iberian, the closest parallels coming from AndalucÃa, dating to the fourth or third century BC. The Aust figure may have arrived in Britain via the Atlantic trading systems. Bristol City Museum and Art Gallery.

The tin route served the Mediterranean world well and was probably left in the hands of native middlemen until the Romans had firmly established themselves in Iberia and southern Gaul towards the end of the second century BC, when new commercial pressures began to take over and exploration began in earnest. The first man known to have penetrated the old trade routes after Pytheas was the historian, Polybius who made 'journeys through Africa, Spain, and Gaul and voyages on the seas that lie on the farther side of these countries'. He may have reached the port of Corbilo on the Loire estuary but this is not certain. A little later, between 96 and 93 BC, the proconsul of Hispania Ulterior, P. Licinius Crassus, campaigned along the Atlantic coast of Iberia to consolidate the route to the Galician tin supplies: controlling the west had become an imperative. Four decades later Caesar had conquered Galicia and now opened up the whole of Gaul.

The Westward Expansion of La Tène Culture

In the restless mobility of the Early La Tène period aspects of the elite culture of the La Tène heartland—the mid-Loire, Marne, Moselle, and Bohemia—spread westwards to the extremities of the Atlantic zone. By what processes this spread took place is difficult to say but most likely it was through systems of elite gift exchange, with weapons and other items of prestige being offered in return for metals. The exotic nature of these imports stimulated the local craftsmen, and production in consequence increased.

In Brittany this process had already begun in the Hallstatt D period (above, pp. 86–8). Once under way the connectivity was maintained throughout the Early La Tène period. The intensity, and indeed the nature, of the contacts are difficult to characterize, but the remarkable ceramic art of Armorica in the fourth century is witness to the willingness and ability of local potters to accept the most up-to-date ideas developed by metalworking craftsmen in the Marne and Moselle regions. The inspiration which the potters received would almost certainly have been through the medium of imported metalwork. Of this virtually nothing has survived in the archaeological record except the fragment of a helmet found at the sanctuary of Tronoën, but it is possible that another metal helmet, which was eventually deposited in a cist burial in Wales at Cerrig-y-Drudion, had also passed through Brittany. Tronoën has in addition produced the only Early La Tène swords so far found in Brittany.

Northern France, the Low Countries, and Britain received a flow of goods throughout the Early La Tène period. The rite of elite burial distinguished by two-wheeled vehicles, frequent in the Marne and Moselle regions in the late fifth century, was adopted in four peripheral areas: the Lower Seine valley, the Ardennes, the Haine, and Yorkshire. By what means the idea spread is difficult to say. A population movement is one possibility but the evidence could equally well be explained by supposing that local elites with access to knowledge of vehicle burial (and possibly the vehicles themselves, delivered as diplomatic gifts) simply adopted the fashion. Once established it would have generated its own momentum. Other gifts that passed through the exchange network included daggers, swords, shields, and spears, as well as trinkets such as fibulae. All were copied by native craftsmen and accepted into the local repertoire.

The distribution of these Early La Tène items reflects the continuation of the systems of connectivity that had been established in the preceding Hallstatt D period. In other words, the networks of contact linking northern France, the Low Countries, and Britain continued with little change over a period spanning the sixth to fourth centuries. Thus the British craftsmen who in the sixth century began to modify imported Hallstatt D daggers, and were the successors of the makers of British Hallstatt C swords, were themselves succeeded by craftsmen who responded to new styles of La Tène daggers arriving on the island through exchanges.

For Ireland during this time the archaeological evidence suggests an altogether different picture. In the Hallstatt C period it is apparent that the island played a significant part in the exchange networks which bound the Atlantic communities together, in the process receiving an inflow of elite items from west central Europe. The fact that Ireland is specifically named in the *Ora Maritima* is an indication of its prominence. But from the beginning of the sixth century until the end of the third century BC there is little trace of any contact with Continental developments, and indeed the dendrochronological evidence shows that over large areas forests were regenerating—an observation suggestive of a decline in population. After the sixth century Ireland seems to have become a backwater for several centuries.

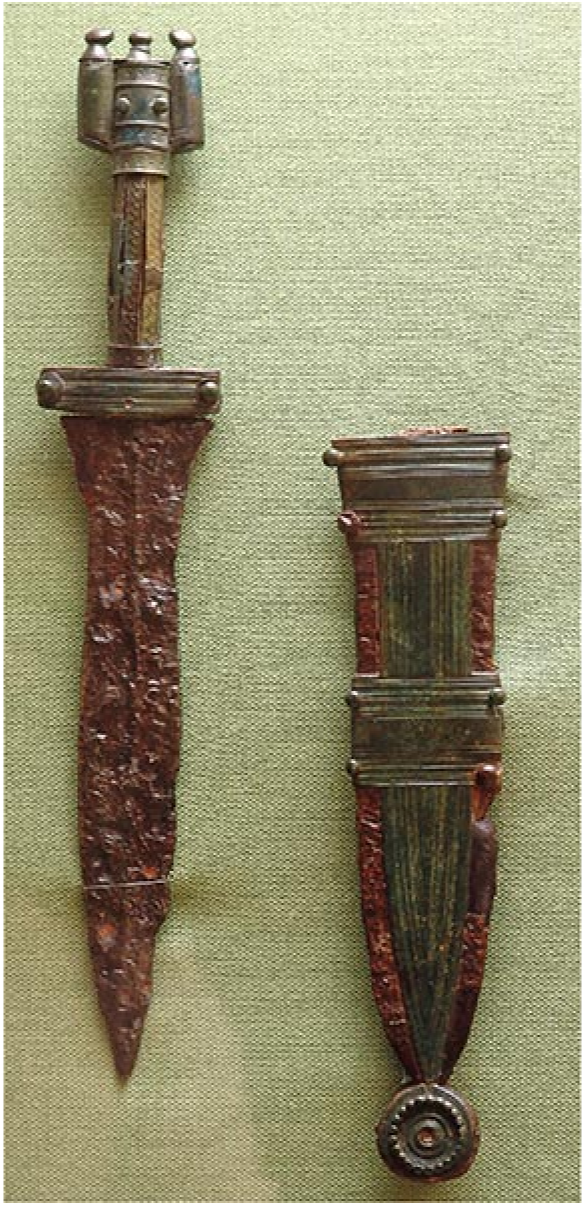
The folk movements which were under way by the beginning of the fourth century in west central Europe disrupted the long-established networks of exchange which had developed throughout Europe. In Brittany, north-western France, the Low Countries, and Britain there is a marked diminution in the volume of centrally produced goods and ideas absorbed into local repertoires. Each of the regions developed its own distinctive culture in relative isolation and it is not until the late third century that extensive networks of exchange begin to develop once more.

Meanwhile in Iberia

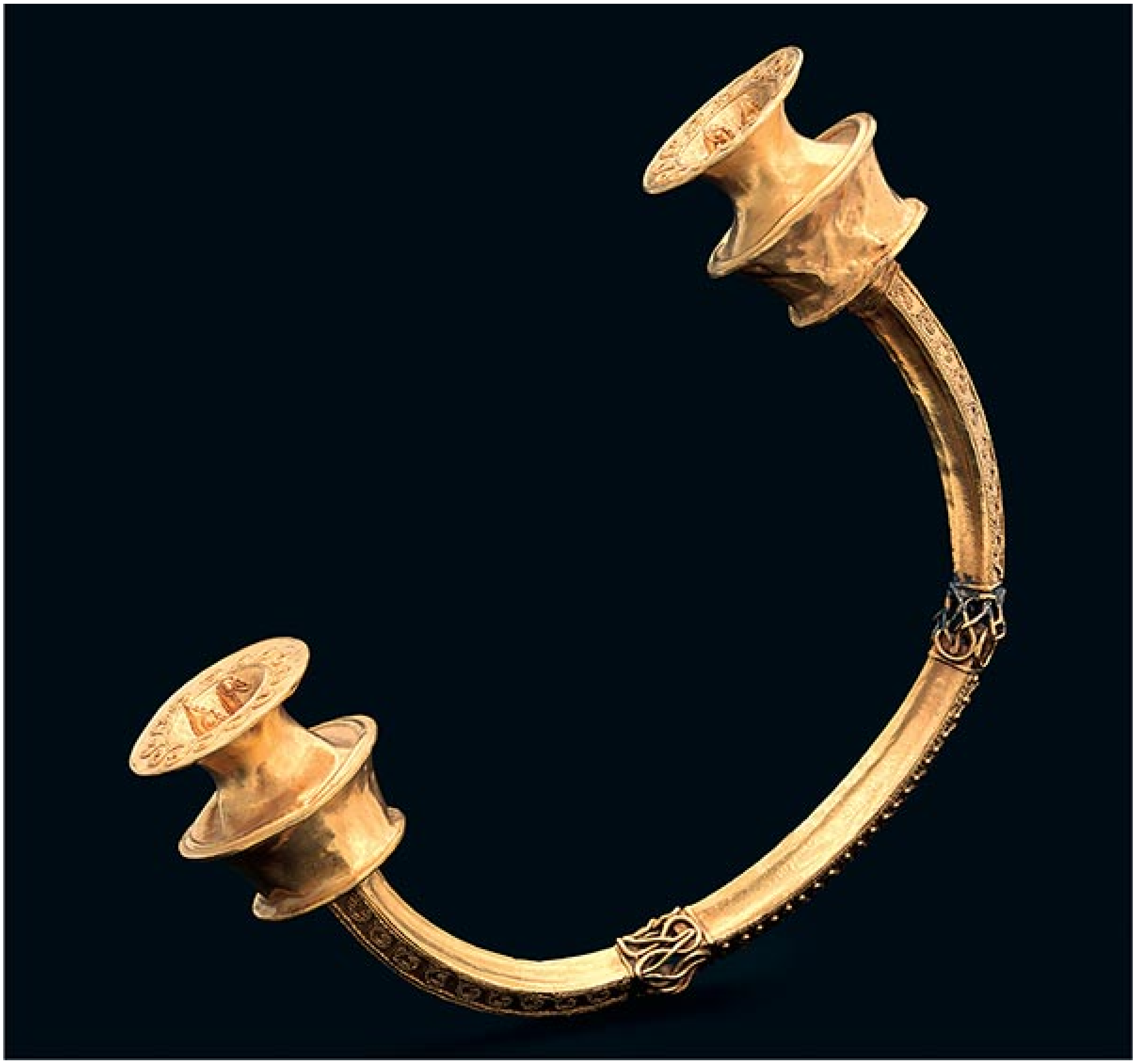
From the sixth century BC the Iberian culture of the south and east of the peninsula developed the attributes of a state or a series of small states and increasingly became part of the broader Mediterranean. Phoenician, and later Carthaginian, influence in the south grew while in the east the coastal polities benefited from close trading contacts with the Greek cities established around the Golfe du Lion—a fact amply demonstrated by the large quantities of Greek pottery now reaching the peninsula.

Inland the Celtiberian tribes continued to develop their distinctive warrior aristocratic culture in relative isolation, profiting from their central position between the metal-rich Atlantic zone and the Mediterranean markets. It was from their Iberian neighbours that in the fourth century they learned the technology for turning pottery on the wheel and for making rotary querns to mill their grain. A century later a Celtiberian script had been developed deriving largely from that of coastal Iberia.

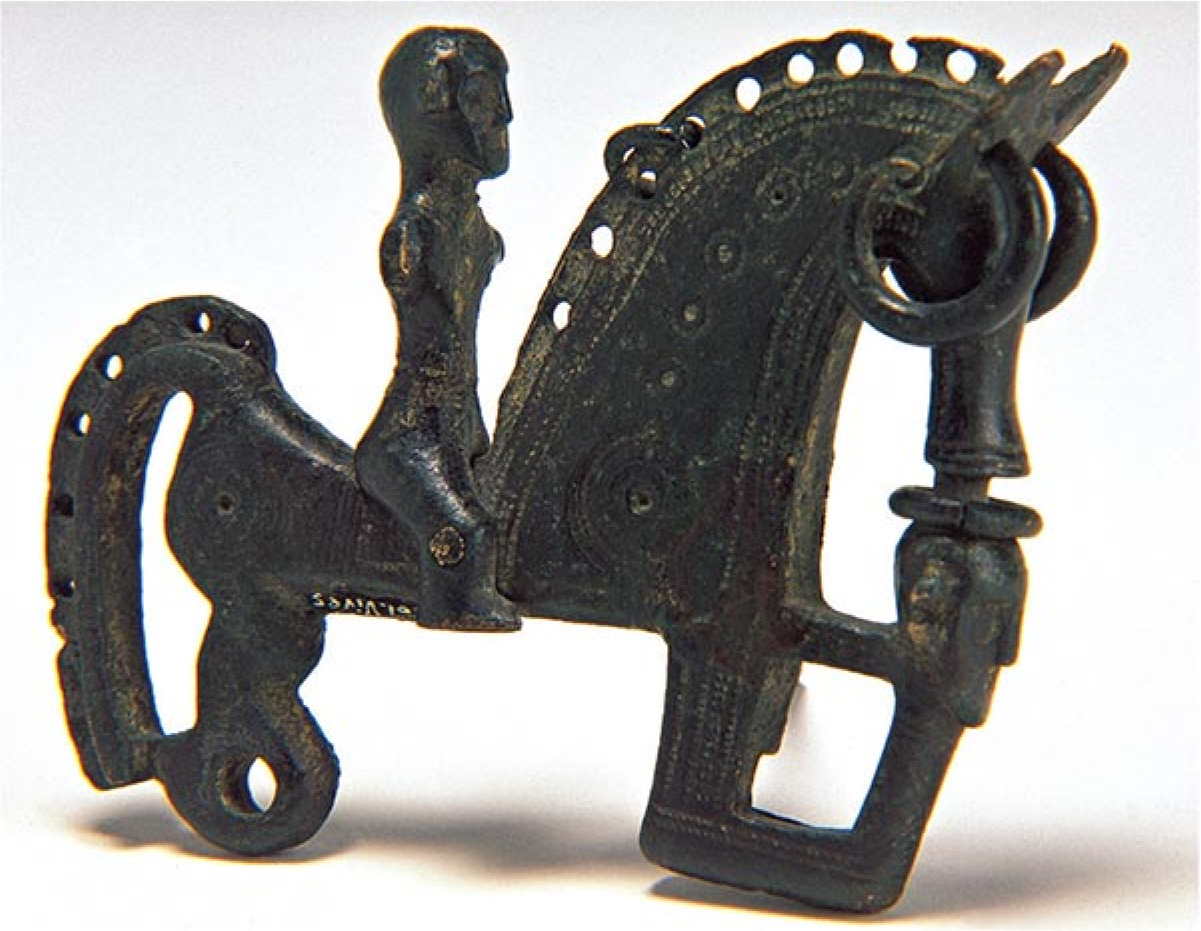
Celtiberian culture received some influences from the La Tène cultural zone. A scatter of La Tène artefacts have been found, most notably a collection of third-century weapons from a burial at Quintanas de Gormaz, which included a scabbard decorated with dragon-pairs. This array of material shows that contacts existed with communities north of the Pyrenees, but it need not imply anything more than processes of gift exchange. Nor does the adoption of the torc as an item of prestige display mean more than a sharing of belief or value systems. The silver torcs of the Meseta and the gold torcs of the north-west are distinctively Celtiberian in style, as are the widely distributed horse-and-rider fibulae.



7.3 Antennae-hilted sword of the third to second century from Villanueva de Teba, Burgos. Museo de Burgos, Spain.

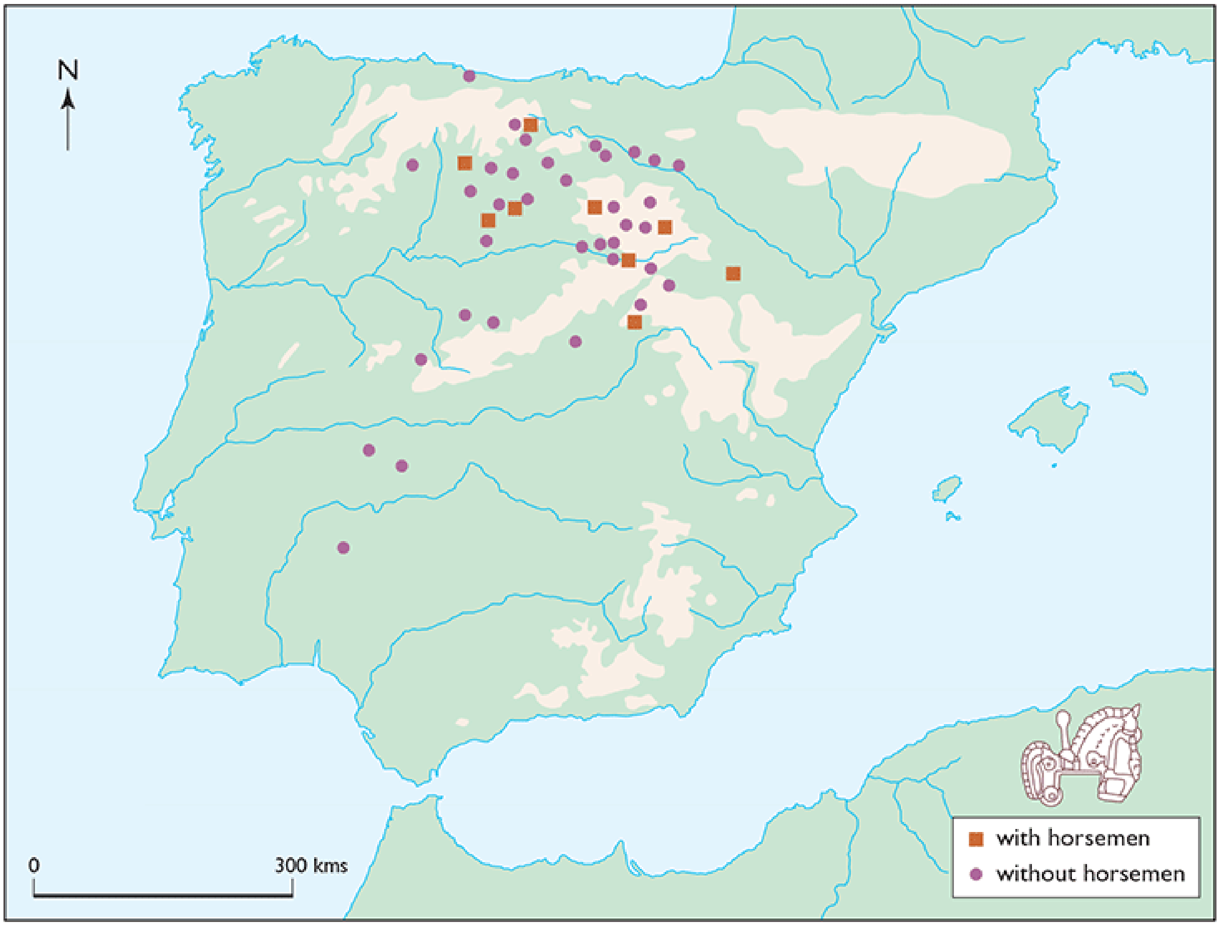


7.4 (*Above*) Gold torc of the fourth to second centuries BC from Vilas Boas, Portugal. Museu Nacional de Arqueologia, Lisbon.



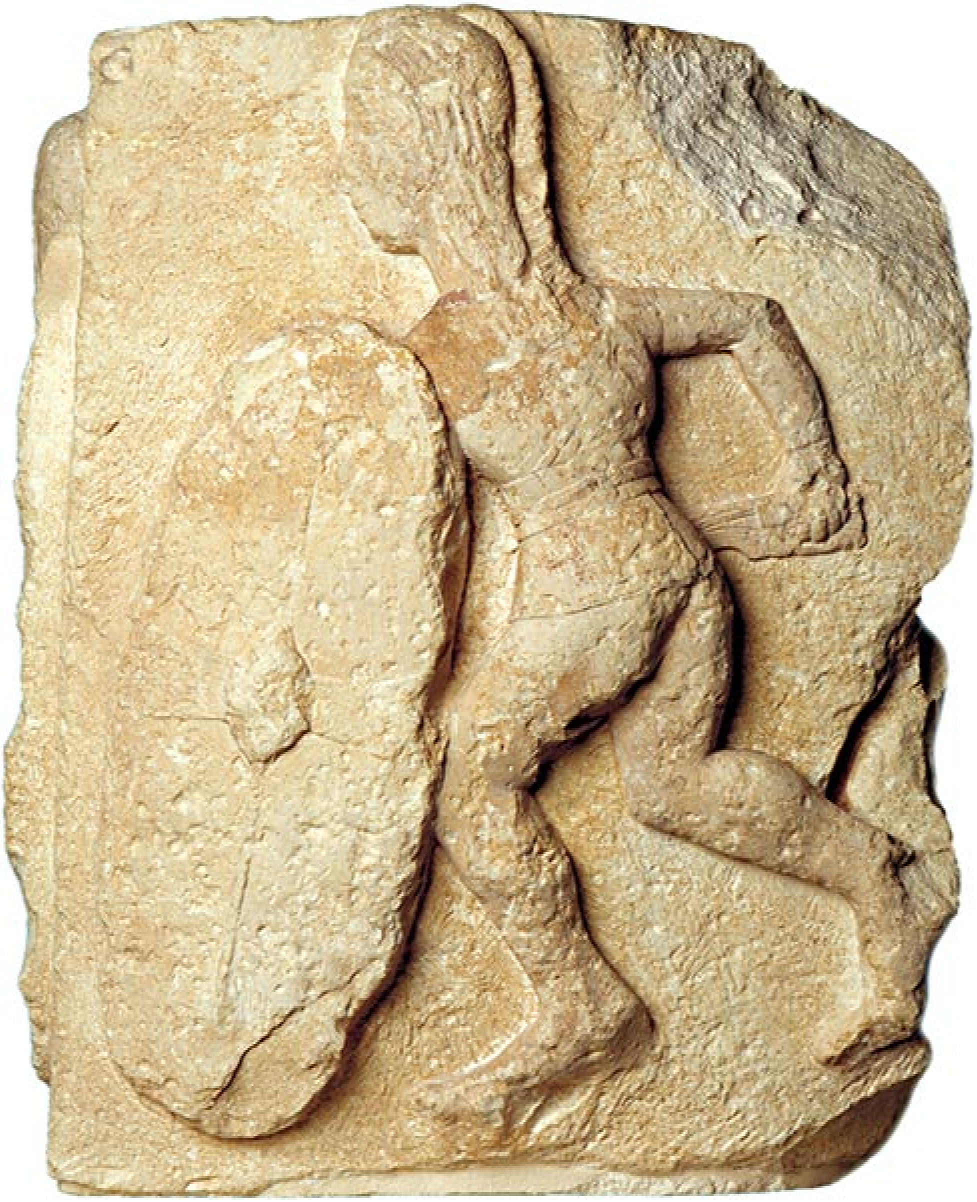
7.5 Horse brooches with or without a rider are found in the Celtiberian region in the fourth to second centuries. This example is from Lancia, León. Museo Arqueológico Nacional, Madrid.

The possibility that groups of La Tène Celts may have moved south into Celtiberian lands, as raiders, settlers, or mercenaries, cannot, however, be ruled out. Celtic war bands may have attached themselves to the incursion of the Cimbri in 104 BC and Caesar specifically mentions the arrival in Lérida, in 49 BC, of 6,000 Gauls, including Gallic cavalry, Ruthenian archers, and their families. The contribution of these and other possible intruders to Celtiberian culture seems, however, to have been minimal.

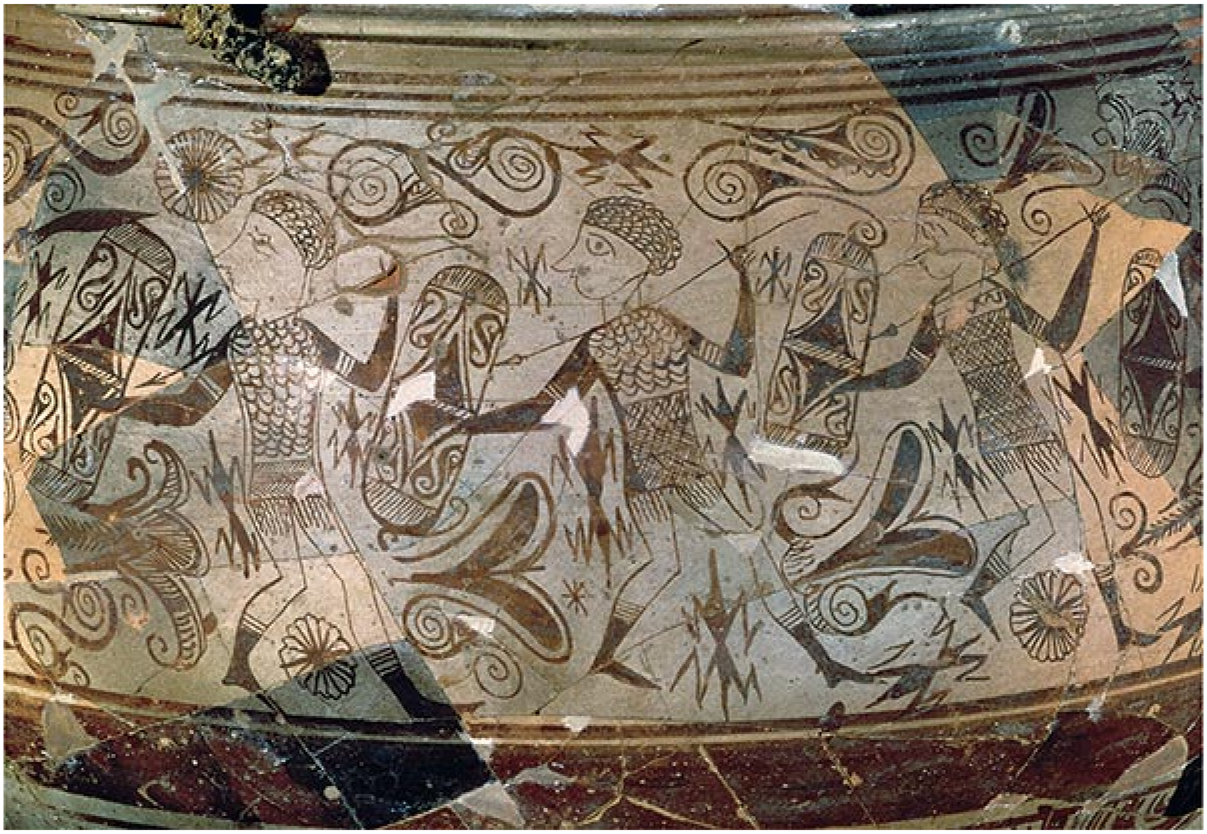


7.6 Distribution of horseman fibulae, typical of the Celtiberian area of Spain. The style is local but the basic structure of the brooch is found throughout much of western Europe.

From its homeland in the north-east of the peninsula, Celtiberian culture spread to many other areas of the country. Archaeological evidence from grave finds suggests an extension westwards to the territory of the Vettones in the fifth century BC, and to Extremadura and the far west, where *Celtius* was used to indicate ethnic origin. According to Pliny, some Celtiberians from this region moved south to settle in Baetica, where they became known as the *Celtici*: one of the towns, Penaflor, was called *Celti* in the Iberian and Roman period. Pliny as well as other writers record further movements to the north: the *Celti Praestamarci* settled in northern Portugal, the *Gallaeci* moved to the extreme north-west (modern Galicia), while the *Galli* settled in the Ebro valley. That all these groups were known by ethnic rather than tribal designations is an indication that the Celtiberian expansion is more likely to have been the result of military elites taking over the power structure of the peripheral tribes than of large movements of population. Beyond this zone raids may have penetrated still further into the territories of the more advanced Iberian communities, and it was in these regions that mercenaries, like those depicted on the stone relief from Osuna or the pot from Liria, will have found employment.



7.7 Stone relief of a warrior from Osuna, AndalucÃa, Spain. The warrior holds a typical Iberian *falcata* (single-edge sword) in his right hand, but his elongated shield is of La Tène type and quite unlike native Iberian round shields. Third or second century BC. Museo Arqueológico Nacional, Madrid.



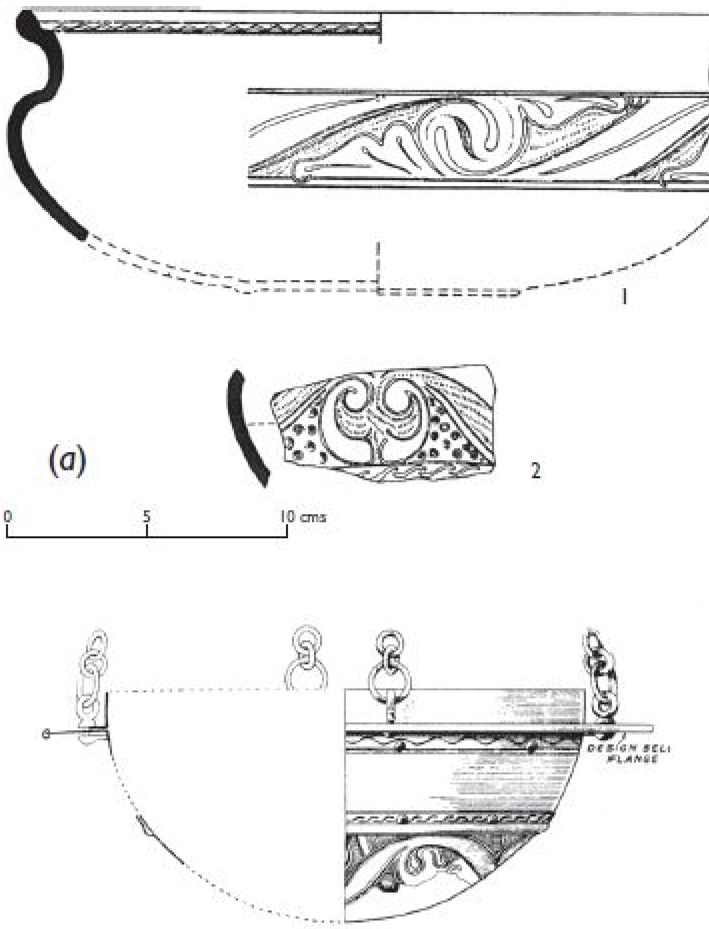
7.8 Detail of the decoration of a painted pottery vessel from Liria, Valencia, Spain, showing a warrior holding an elongated shield of La Tène type. Third or second century BC. Museo de Prehistoria de Valencia.

Communities of the Outer Atlantic Zone

In spite of the broad similarities which bound them, the communities of the Atlantic fringe exhibited a considerable cultural variety. Some aspects of this are worth considering in order to provide an indication of the diverse social systems which could exist in what had now become peripheral areas away from the main centres of innovation and movement.

The metal-rich core provides a good starting-point. The Armorican peninsula, south-western Britain, south Wales, and southern Ireland—all essentially peninsulas surrounded by the Atlantic—share many physical characteristics, and aspects of their culture suggest that links between them were maintained throughout much of the formative period (1300–600 BC).

The communities of the Armorican peninsula developed a highly distinctive culture which maintained strong links with west central Europe especially after the sixth century BC. By the fifth century local craftsmen had adopted the symbols and grammar of La Tène art. The population was concentrated more in the coastal zone than in the centre of the peninsula. The principal settlement form was the enclosed farmstead of family or extended family type, comprising one or more small subrectangular houses. Some larger and more complex sites reflect the hierarchical structure of society. A frequently occurring feature is the souterrain—an elongated chamber or series of chambers tunnelled out of the soft bedrock and entered from the surface through one or more shafts. The function of souterrains is much debated, but the explanation most likely lies in a storage use, possibly involving a belief in the power of the chthonic deities to preserve and protect the stored commodities. The distribution of souterrains, which have been found in considerable number in Brittany (largely because tractors introduced particularly in the post-war period caused the hollowed chambers to collapse), provides a striking impression of the extent of the classic Armorican Iron Age culture and its sharp boundary with the rest of France. The second settlement type is the defended coastal promontories, generally referred to as cliff-castles. These occur in some number, particularly around the northern and western coasts. Little is known of their internal features or chronology, but it is clear from Caesar’s accounts of his Armorican campaign in the mid-first century BC that cliff-castles were widely used at that time. While it is possible that their substantial defences endowed them with a higher social status than the more modest farmsteads, there is no direct evidence that this was so and a ritual function is not unlikely.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(a)
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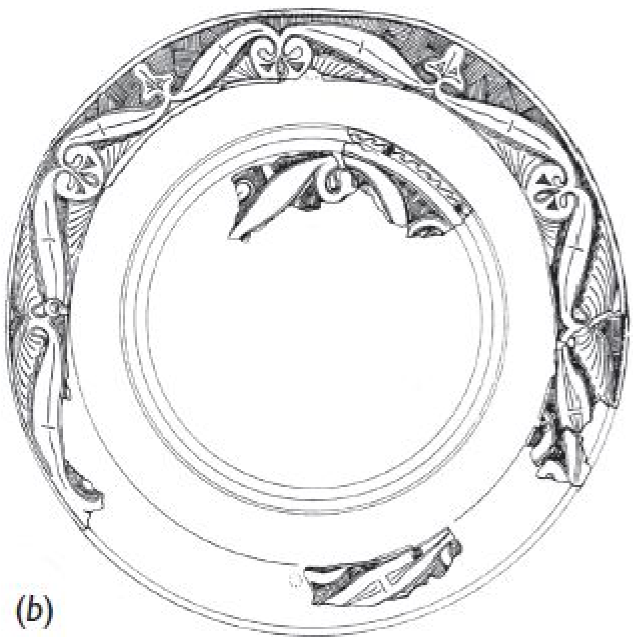
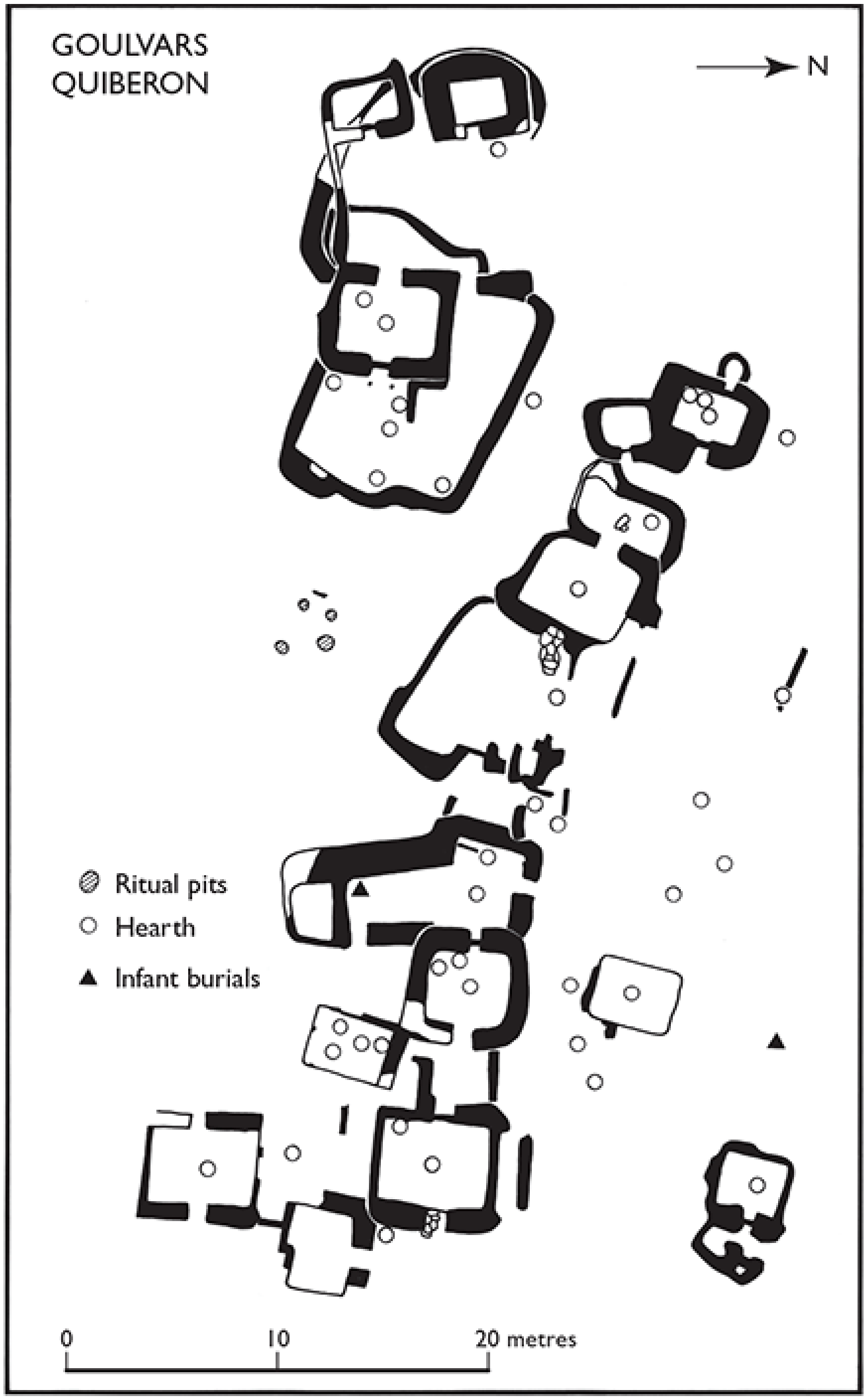
DESIGN SELI
FLANGE

7.9*a* Curvilinear decorated pots from Brittany of the fourth century BC. From Blavet, Hénon, Côtes d’Armor.

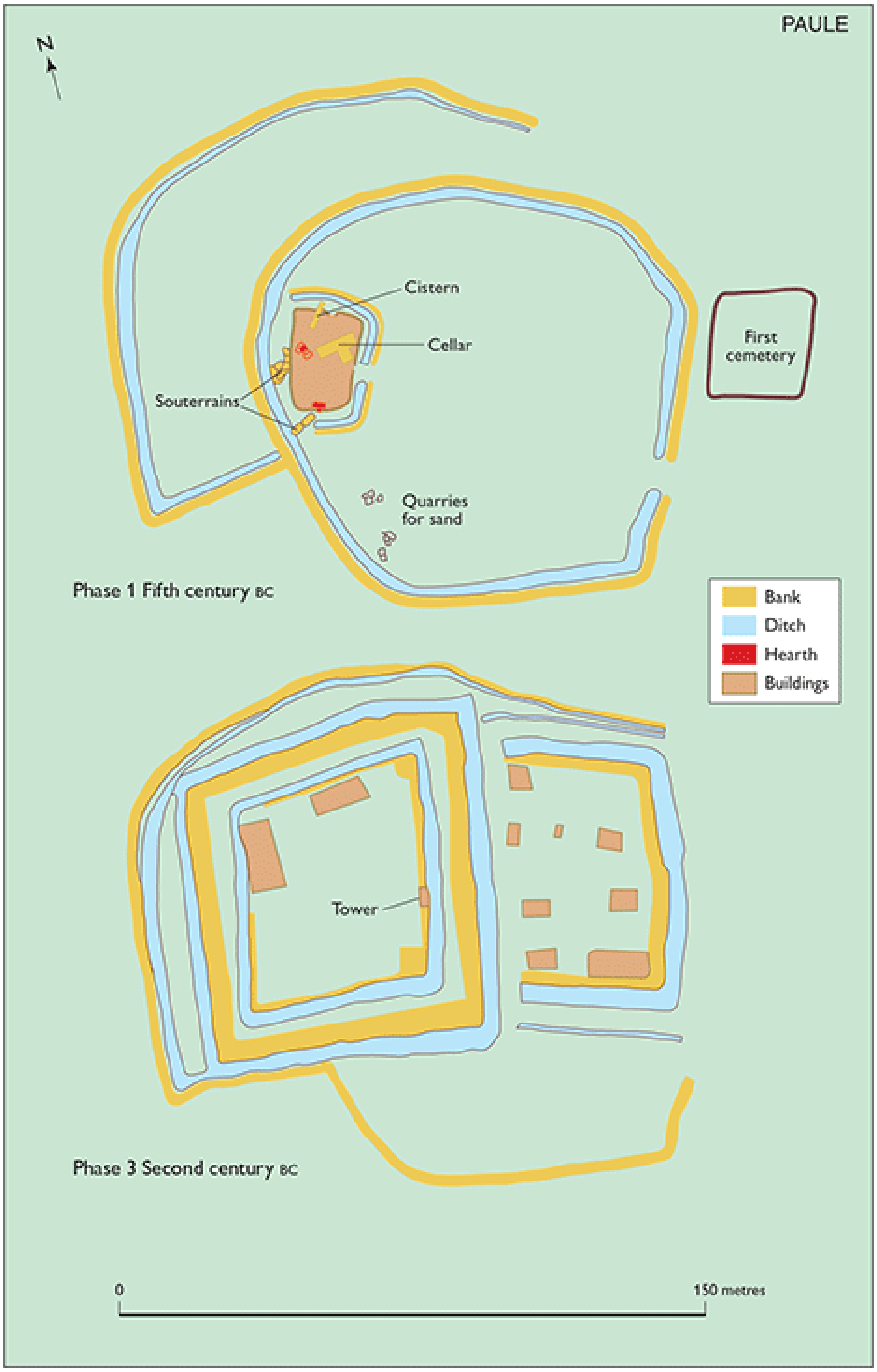


7.9*b* The decorated bronze item from Cerrig-y-Drudion, Clwyd, Wales, reconstructed here as a hanging bowl, may possibly be a helmet. The decoration is highly reminiscent of styles of pottery decoration in Brittany but the basket-work cross-hatching within the designs may indicate British manufacture. National Museum of Wales, Cardiff.

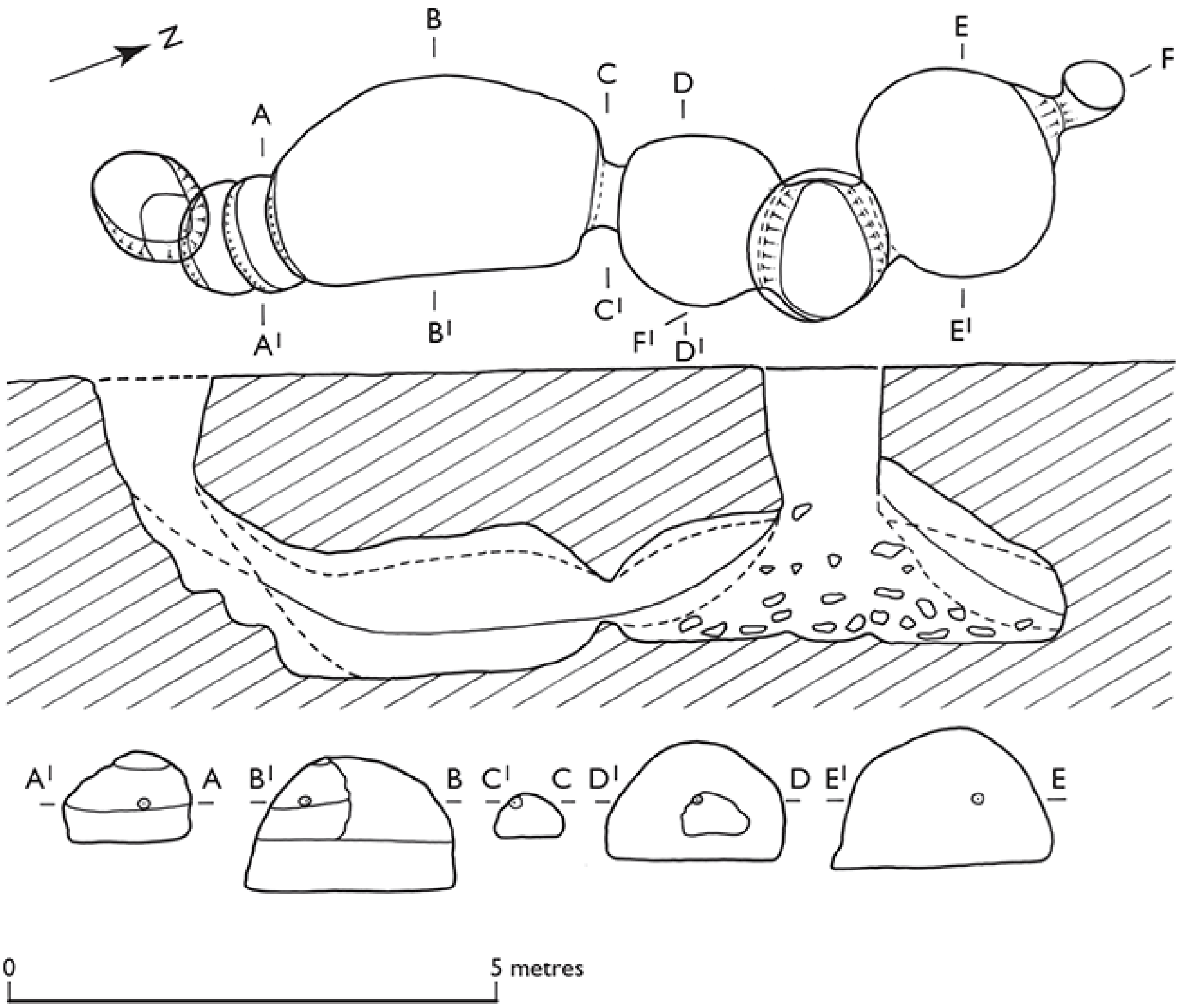
Another highly distinctive aspect of the Armorican Iron Age is the prominence of standing stones (stelae) scattered widely in the landscape. Of the many hundreds which are known, two types can be distinguished: tall pillar-like stelae and shorter hemispherical stones. All were worked with some care to create smooth surfaces, the tall types being columnar, faceted, or ridged. A few, most notably the low stela from Kermaria, near Pont-l’Abbé, and the tall example from Sainte-Anne, Trégastel, were carved with curvilinear and rectilinear designs, a reminder that many of the others might also have been decorated with paint. The function of the stelae is unknown, but their prominence in the landscape may suggest that they served as religious foci or boundary markers, perhaps both. The distribution of these stones is closely comparable to that of the souterrains, the two features serving to define western Armorica as a culturally distinct zone.


GOULVARS
QUIBERON
N
▨ Ritual pits
○ Hearth
▲ Infant burials
0
10
20 metres

7.10 The village at Goulvars on the Quiberon peninsula, Morbihan, Brittany. The rectangular style of house-building is typical of the La Tène period in Armorica.


PAULE
N
Cistern
Cellar
Souterrains
First cemetery
Quarries for sand
Phase 1 Fifth century BC
Bank
Ditch
Hearth
Buildings
Tower
Phase 3 Second century BC
0
150 metres

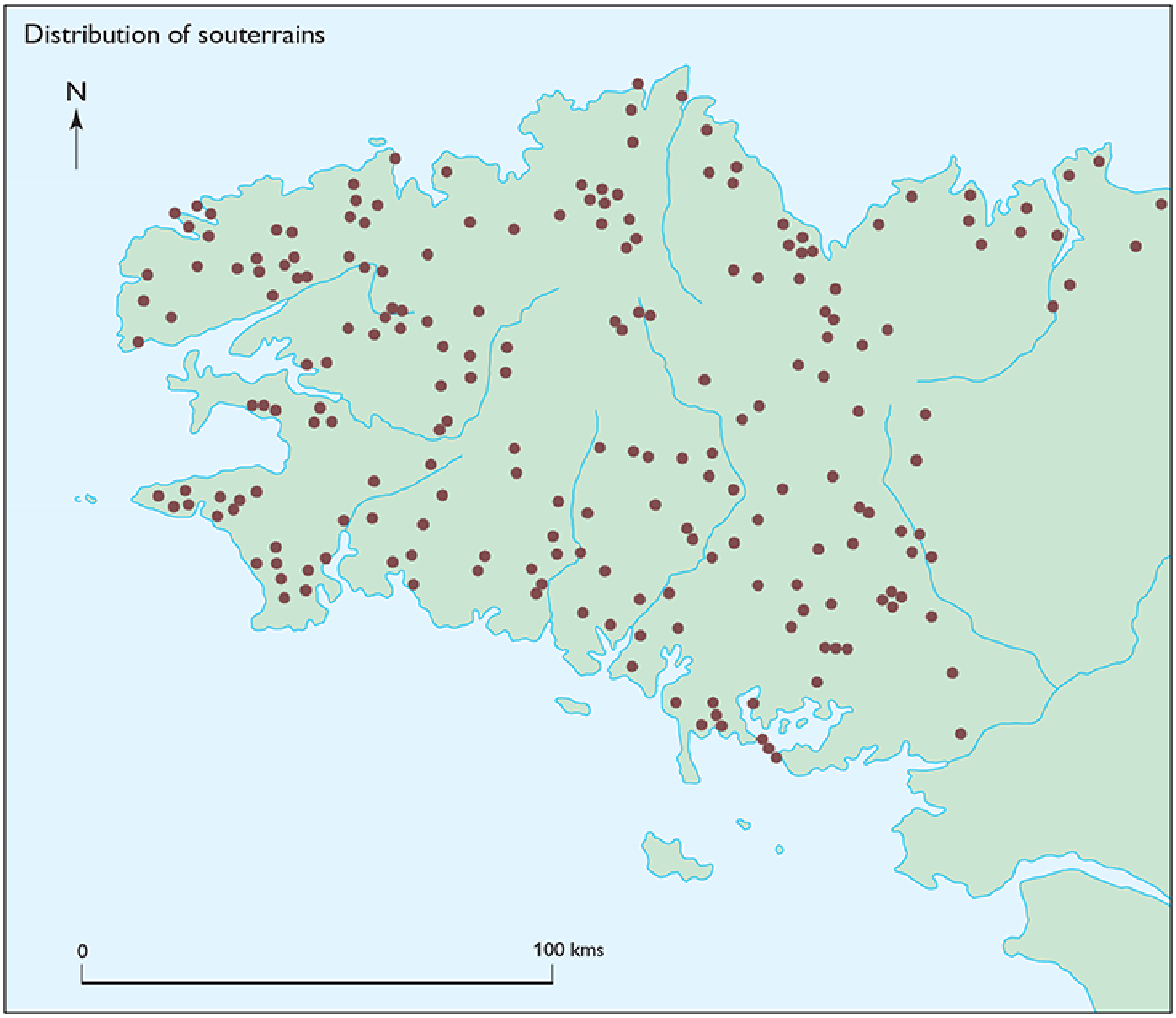
7.11 (*Opposite*) The defended settlement of Saint-Symphorien, Côtes d'Armor, in Brittany, was discovered during road-building and has been the scene of a major excavation. It is a complex multi-period site of high status belonging to the La Tène period. Among the finds was a stone carving of a god playing a lyre (see Fig. 10.29).



7.12 (*Above*) Souterrain found at Lauban, Kerfourn, Morbihan, Brittany. These underground chambers may have been used for storage, perhaps of seed grain.

The culture of the south-western peninsula of Britain reflects that of Armorica but has its own defining characteristics. There is a preference here for pottery decorated with curvilinear motifs, though the British South-western Decorated Wares are less exuberant than contemporary Breton wares.

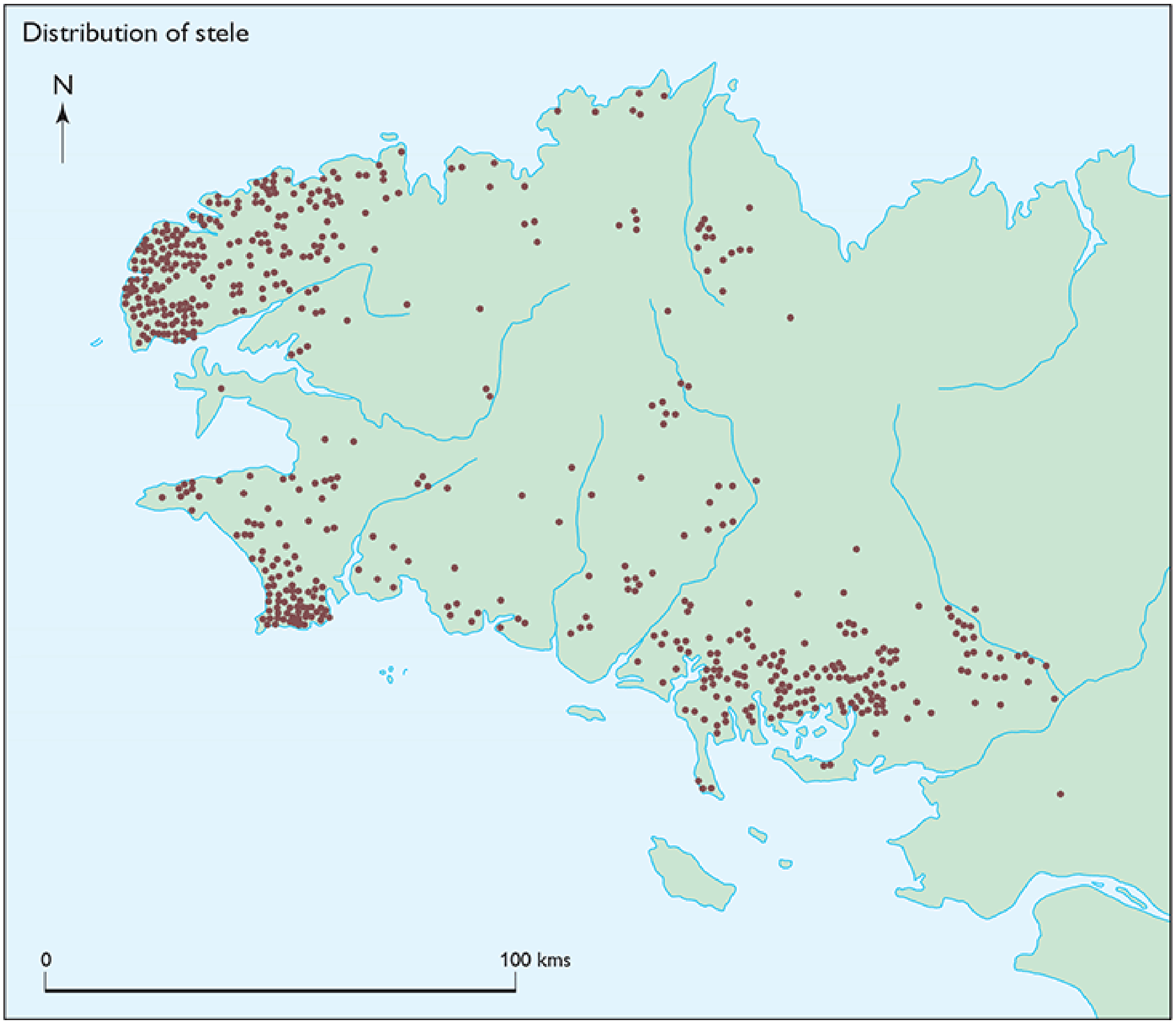
The settlement pattern has close similarities to that of Armorica, with defended enclosures for the family or extended family (in Cornwall called ‘rounds’) and cliff-castles around the coasts. In Devon the rather more elaborate multivallate enclosures, usually sited on hill slopes not far from a permanent water supply, suggest a different kind of social organization, perhaps based on the importance of cattle. Underground stone-built storage chambers, called fogous, are the Cornish equivalent to the Breton souterrains.



7.13a The distribution of souterrains in Brittany reflects the distribution of known settlements of the Middle La Tène period, since, where excavation has been on a sufficient scale, they are usually found to be a component of rural settlements.

Much the same array of settlement types occurs across the Severn estuary in south Wales, extending across to the south-west of the country. Here the enclosed homestead type is characterized by Walesland Rath (‘rath’ being the generic name for this type of enclosure in Wales and Ireland), where total excavation has demonstrated a simple arrangement of circular houses in the centre with storage buildings around the periphery, the individual structures being replaced on a number of occasions. The material culture of the south Welsh Iron Age communities is not prolific but includes the sporadic use of decorated pottery imported from across the Severn.

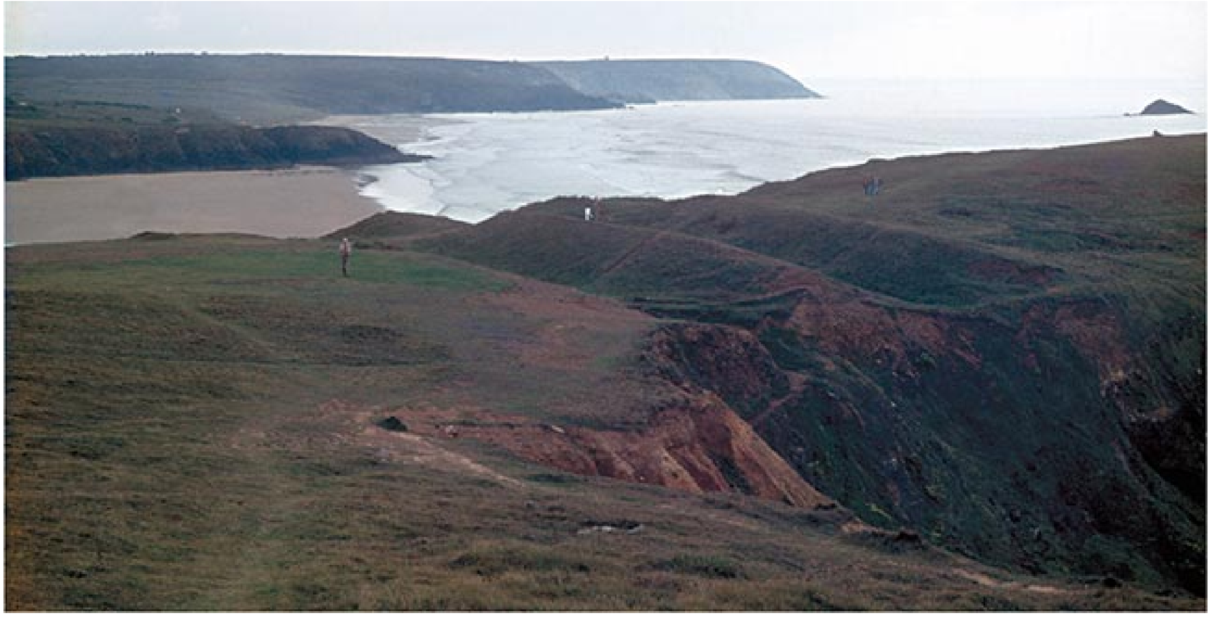
The one noticeable difference between Armorica and the British south-western communities is the absence of stelae in Britain, though the possibility must be allowed that in the island a similar socio-religious function may have been served by wooden pillars no longer extant.



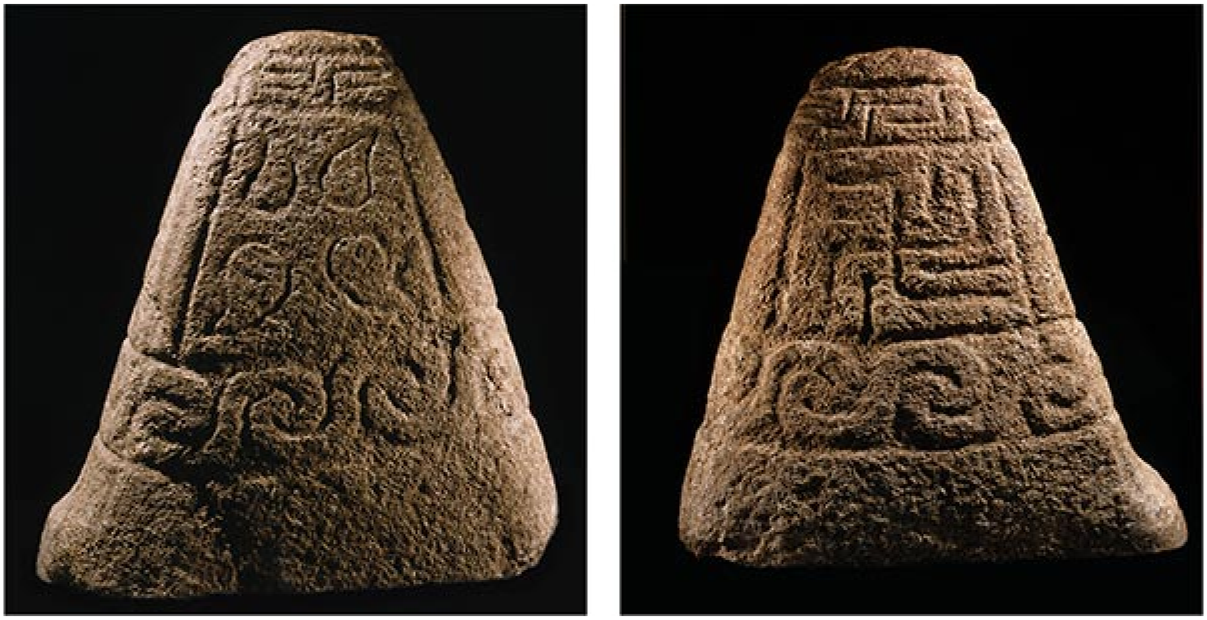
7.13b The prominently coastal distribution of the stelae (standing stones) contrasts with that of the souterrains and would seem to reflect religious attitudes prevalent among the ocean-facing communities.

Ireland remains something of a mystery in this period, but certain characteristics link it culturally to the communities of the south-west.

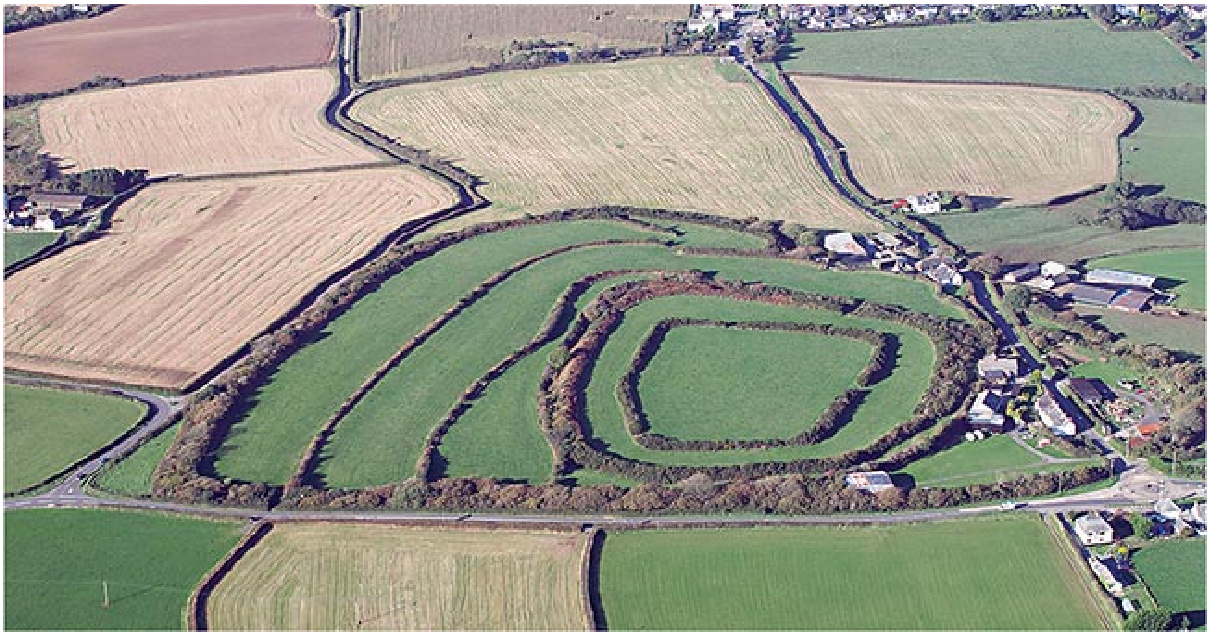
Cliff-castles, largely undated, occur around all the coasts, particularly the south and west, and a small number of carved stone stelae have been recovered, the best-known and most elaborate being the Turoe stone from Co. Galway. One structural feature, which has been much debated, is the *chevaux de frise*—a zone of close-spaced angular stones laid out in advance of the walls or ramparts of fortified enclosures. The most dramatic example of this from Ireland is at Dún Aonghasa on the Aran island of Inishmore. Other examples are known in the west of Ireland, north-west Britain, and south Wales, and are closely comparable to sites in north-west and central northern Iberia. It is tempting to suggest an Atlantic origin of this style of defensive definition, but the angular stones may be nothing more than local manifestations of a more widespread system employing sharpened wooden stakes, an impressive example of which has been excavated at Castell Henllys in south-west Wales.



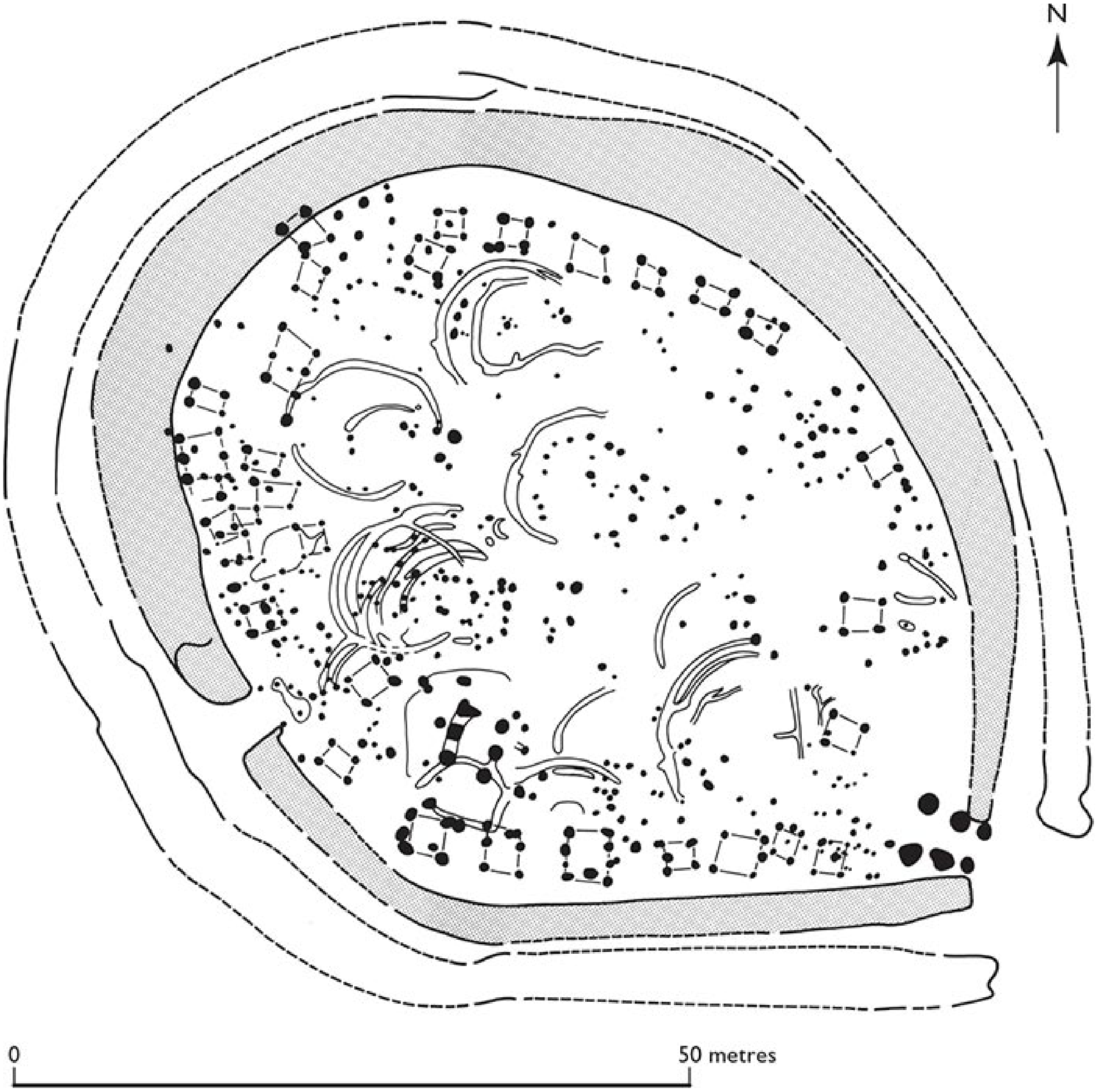
7.14 (*Top*) The cliff-castle of Lostmac'h, Finistère, France. The multiple banks and ditches defend a promontory jutting into the Atlantic.



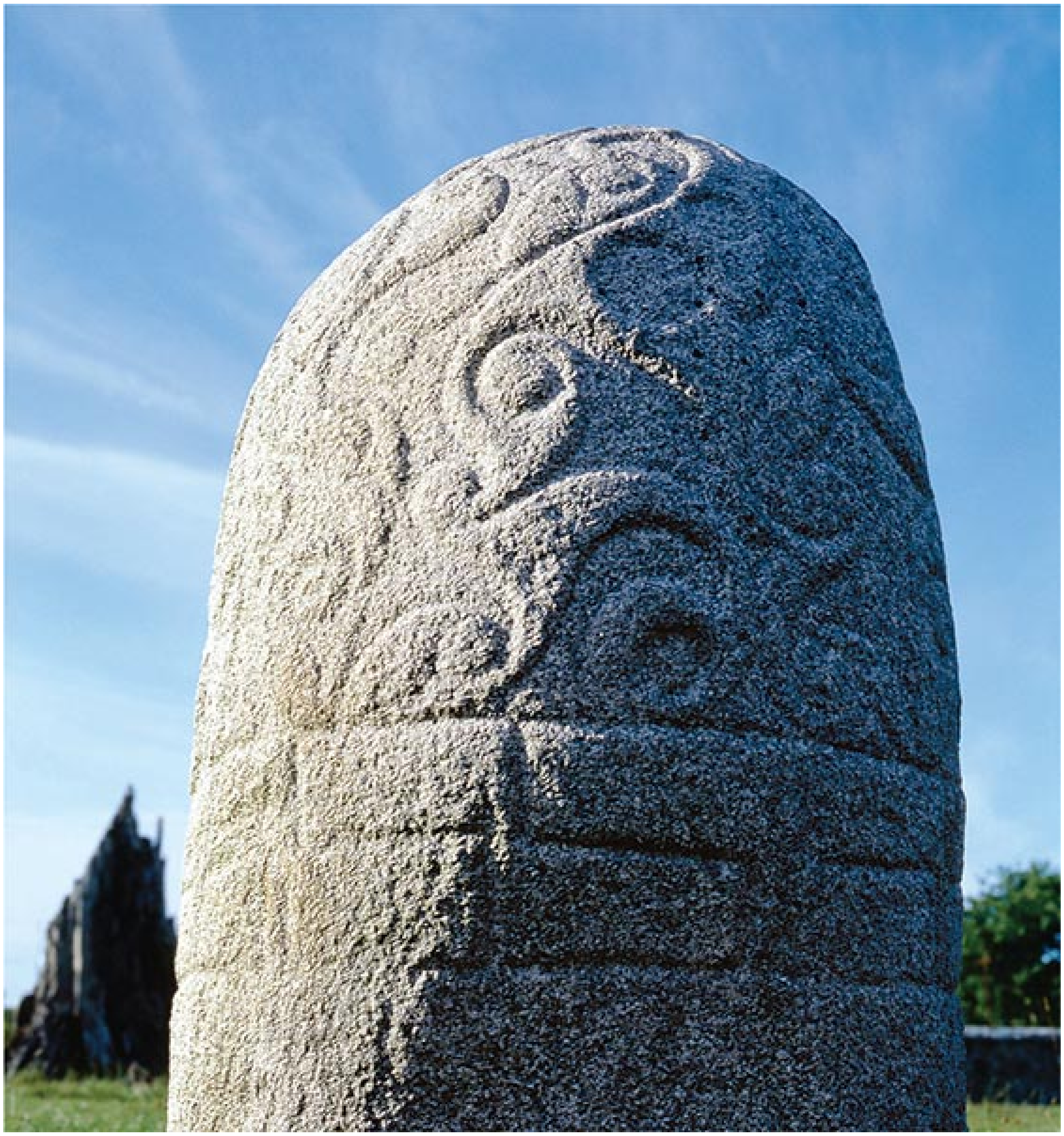
7.15 (*Bottom*) An Iron Age stela from Kermaria, Pont-l’Abbé, Finistère, France, is one of a small group of decorated stelae from Brittany. The style suggests that it may be of fourth-century BC date. A very large number of other stelae exist in Brittany, but, though carefully finished, they are usually plain.



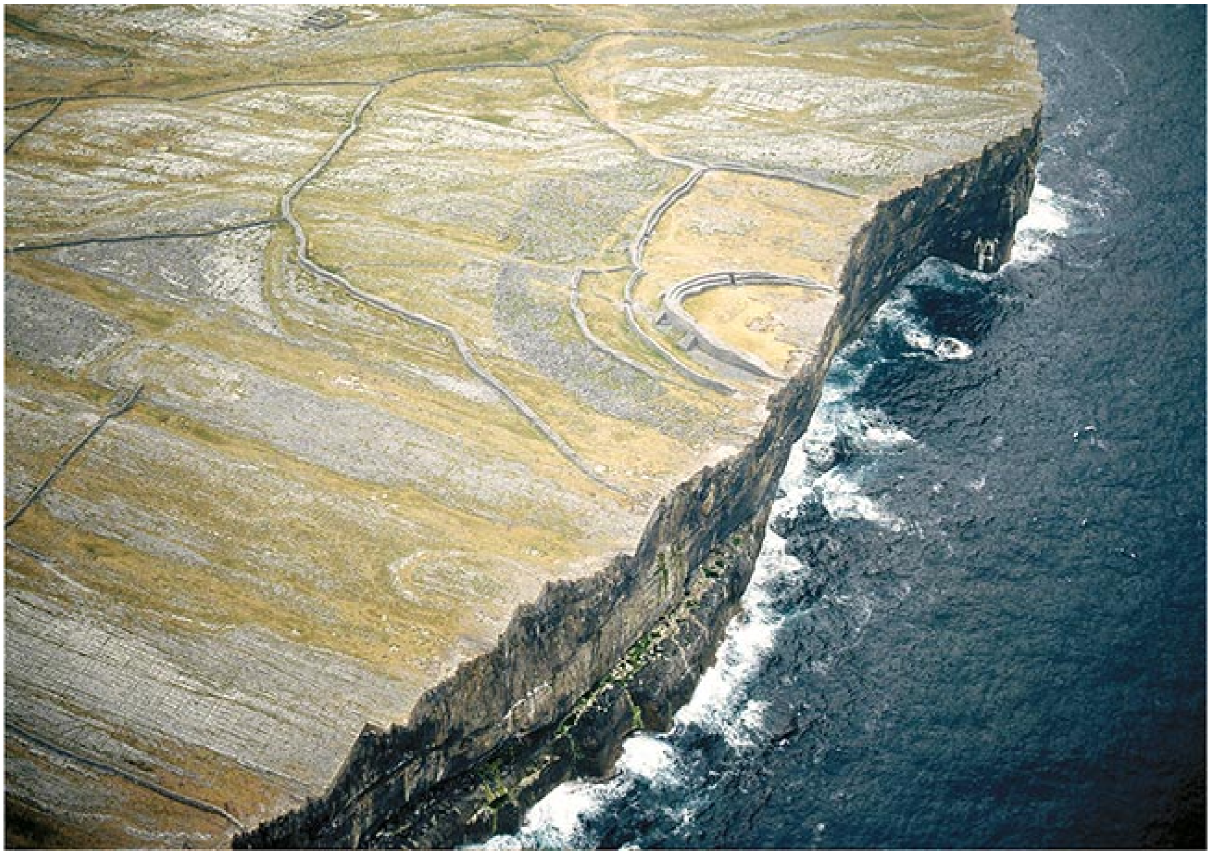
7.16 (*Top*) Aerial view of Clovelly Dykes, north Devon, England. The many lines of roughly concentric earthworks are typical of the ‘multiple-enclosure’ forts of south-western Britain. Some of the enclosures may have served as paddocks for cattle.



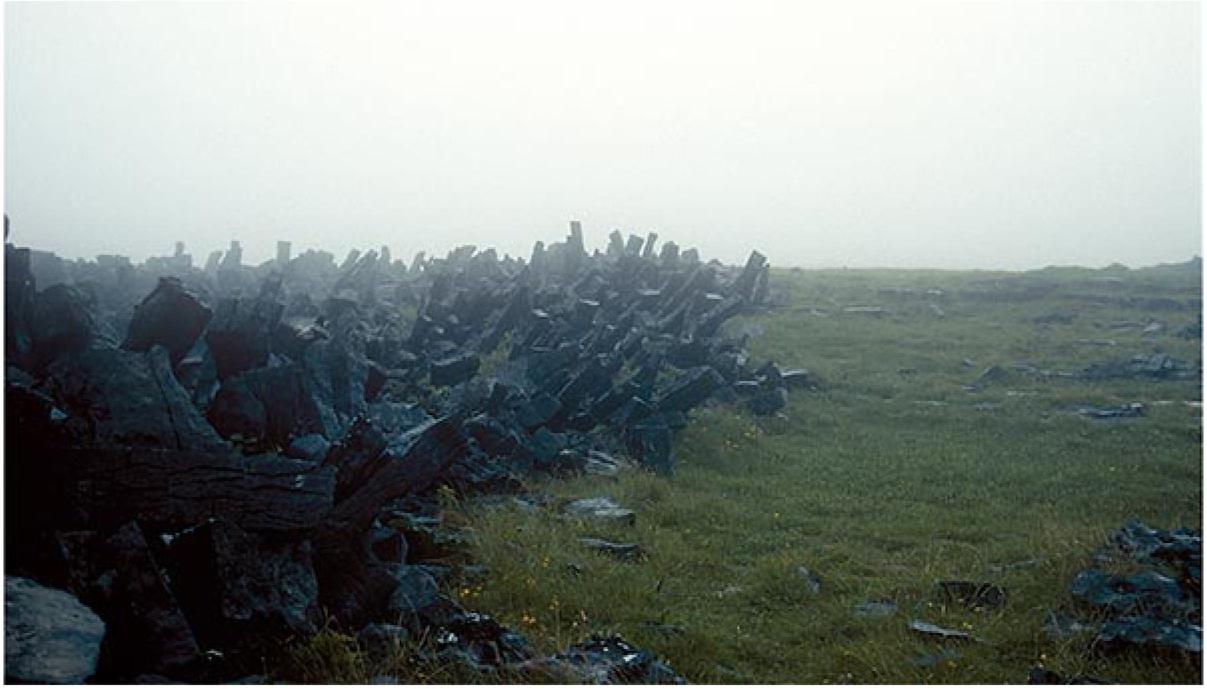
7.17 (*Bottom*) The landscape of south-west Wales is scattered with small defended enclosures called raths. Walesland Rath in Dyfed is one of the few fully excavated examples. The central area was occupied by a succession of circular houses, while around the perimeter were arranged four-post storage structures. Occupation spanned the third and second centuries BC.



7.18 (*Opposite top*) Granite monolith from Turoe, Co. Galway, Ireland, carved in a curvilinear style which suggests a possible date in the first century BC.



7.19 (*Opposite bottom*) The stone fortifications of Dún Aonghasa cling to the edge of the island of Aran, Ireland, while the Atlantic waves pound far below. The fortifications, still undated, have been shown to be multi-period and post-date an extensive Late Bronze Age settlement.

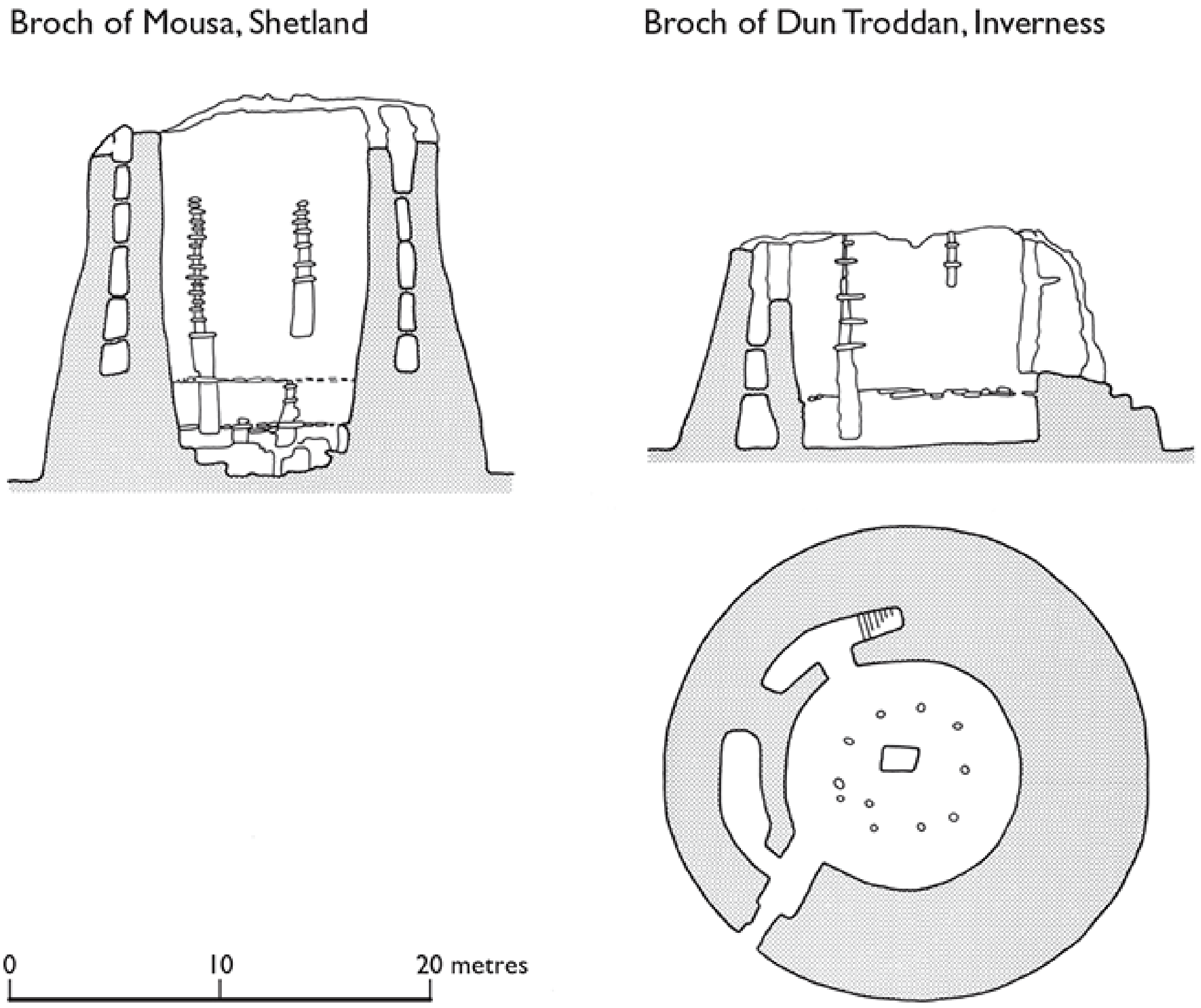


7.20 (*Above*) A barrier of closely spaced angular rocks, appearing from the mist, placed to hinder the approach of men or horses to the fort of Dún Aonghasa, Aran, Ireland. This kind of defensive cordon is known as *chevaux de frise* and is widespread in the west from Iberia to Scotland.

The great stone-built fort of Dún Aonghasa is only one of a group of stone forts found on the Aran Islands and the nearby limestone uplands of the Burren. Although similarities in style may have been conditioned by the use of limestone for building, these western stone forts must reflect a strong local cultural tradition as well as the ability of society to mobilize labour on a massive scale. Little dating evidence has yet been obtained except at Dún Aonghasa where it can be shown that the site began its life as an extensive settlement in the Late Bronze Age before the massive stone walls were erected.

The northern portion of the Atlantic zone extends to the west and north coasts of Scotland and the Islands—the Inner and Outer Hebrides, the Orkneys, and the Shetlands. This zone shares a cohesive culture which can be called that of Atlantic Scotland. Its most notable characteristic is the proliferation of massive stone-built settlements—brochs or duns—in which the desire to monumentalize by grandiose building has gone far beyond the need for physical comfort or even protection. These structures are clearly a statement symbolic of the social status claimed by the lineages who occupied them. At what stage this monumentalization began is not easy to say, but there is sufficient evidence now available to show that the structural tradition can be traced back to the Late Bronze Age. The material culture of Atlantic Scotland is limited and indigenous in the extreme, suggesting cultural isolation throughout most of the Iron Age, though there is evidence of developing contact along the Atlantic seaways in and after the first century BC.

This brief review of the communities of the north-western part of the Atlantic zone has shown something of the variety of cultural responses reflected in the archaeological evidence. The clear impression given is of a cultural focus in Armorica linked to mainstream European development with increasing regionalism and increasing isolation the further one ventured north. The one essential characteristic binding these communities together was a similar social structure based on the family unit or lineage group. There may, in some regions, have been communal works such as hilltop enclosures, perhaps defining the meeting places of the larger community at annual festivals when flocks and herds needed to be gathered in, but evidence for large agglomerations of population is noticeably absent.

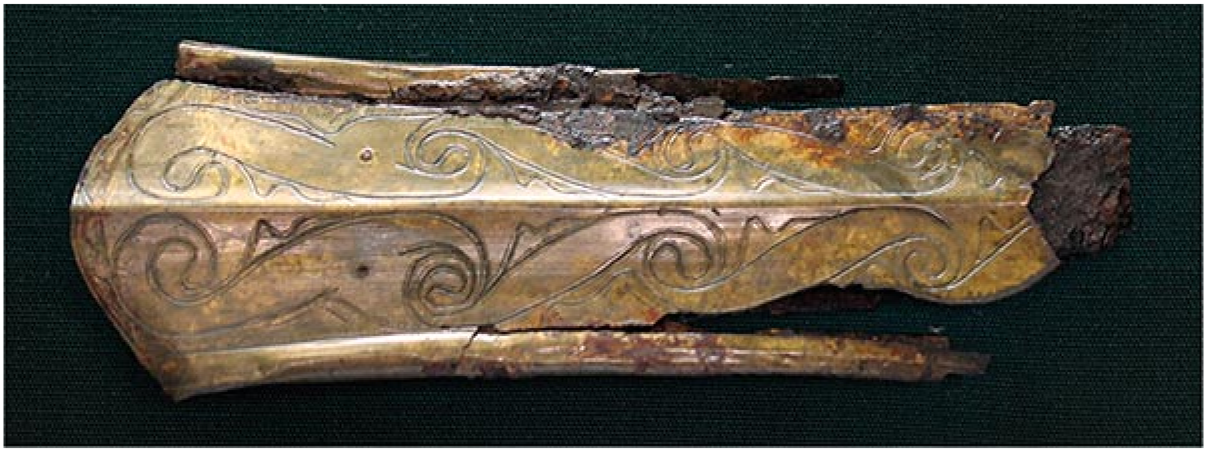


7.21 The brochs of Scotland and the Scottish islands reflect a local tradition of house-building in which the simple idea of the circular house has been transformed into a massive walled structure sometimes of tower-like proportions far outgrowing defensive needs. Brochs may have originated as early as the fifth century BC and may have continued to develop at least to the first century BC.

The Communities of Eastern and Central Britain

The eastern part of Britain, from the Yorkshire Moors to the Thames valley, presents a very varied landscape divided by a number of large rivers flowing eastwards into the North Sea. Within this zone a broad cultural similarity can be recognized, although regional variations persist. In the ninth and eighth centuries a glimpse of an elite society is provided by large, circular, defended enclosures containing substantial circular houses. A little later, from the fifth to the third centuries, the distribution of locally made daggers and anthropoid hilted swords, centred within this zone, is a further indication of a privileged class served by able and inventive craftsmen.

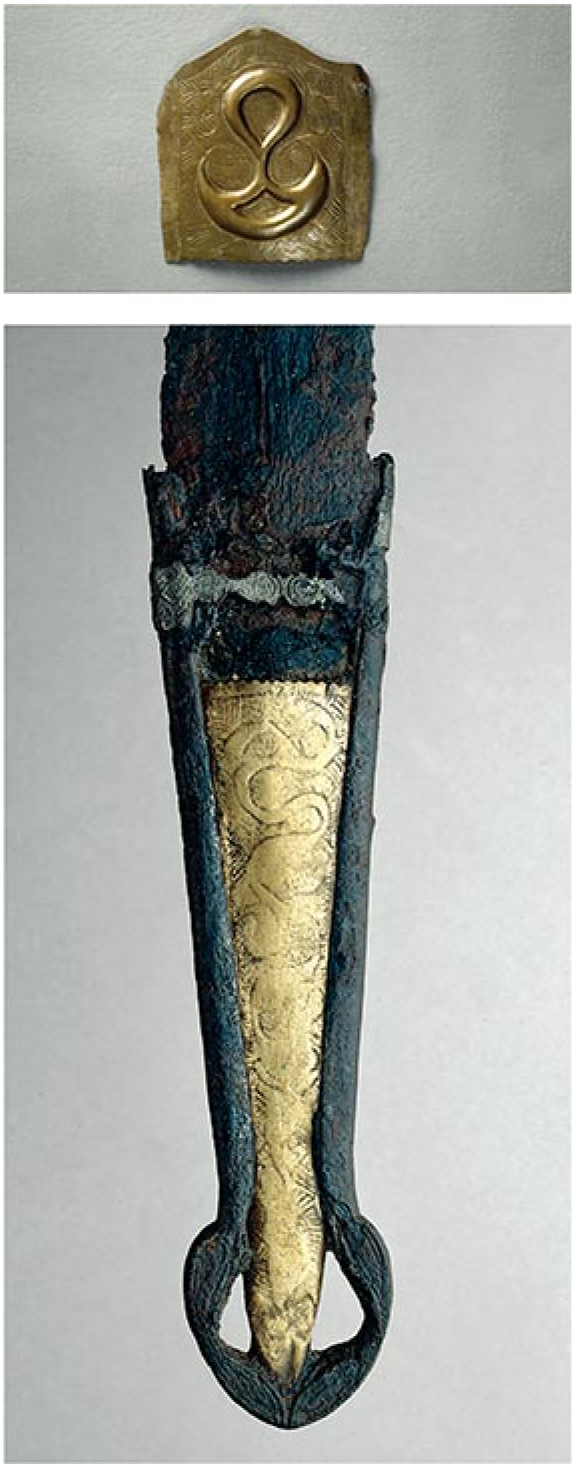
In the late fifth or early fourth century, the elite occupying the area of the Yorkshire wolds, just north of the Humber, adopted the burial practice of their peers in northern France and the Low Countries: the burial of a two-wheeled vehicle and an array of personal gear with the dead man or woman and the definition of individual burials by placing them within square ditched enclosures. The practice, once introduced, persisted at least into the second century BC.



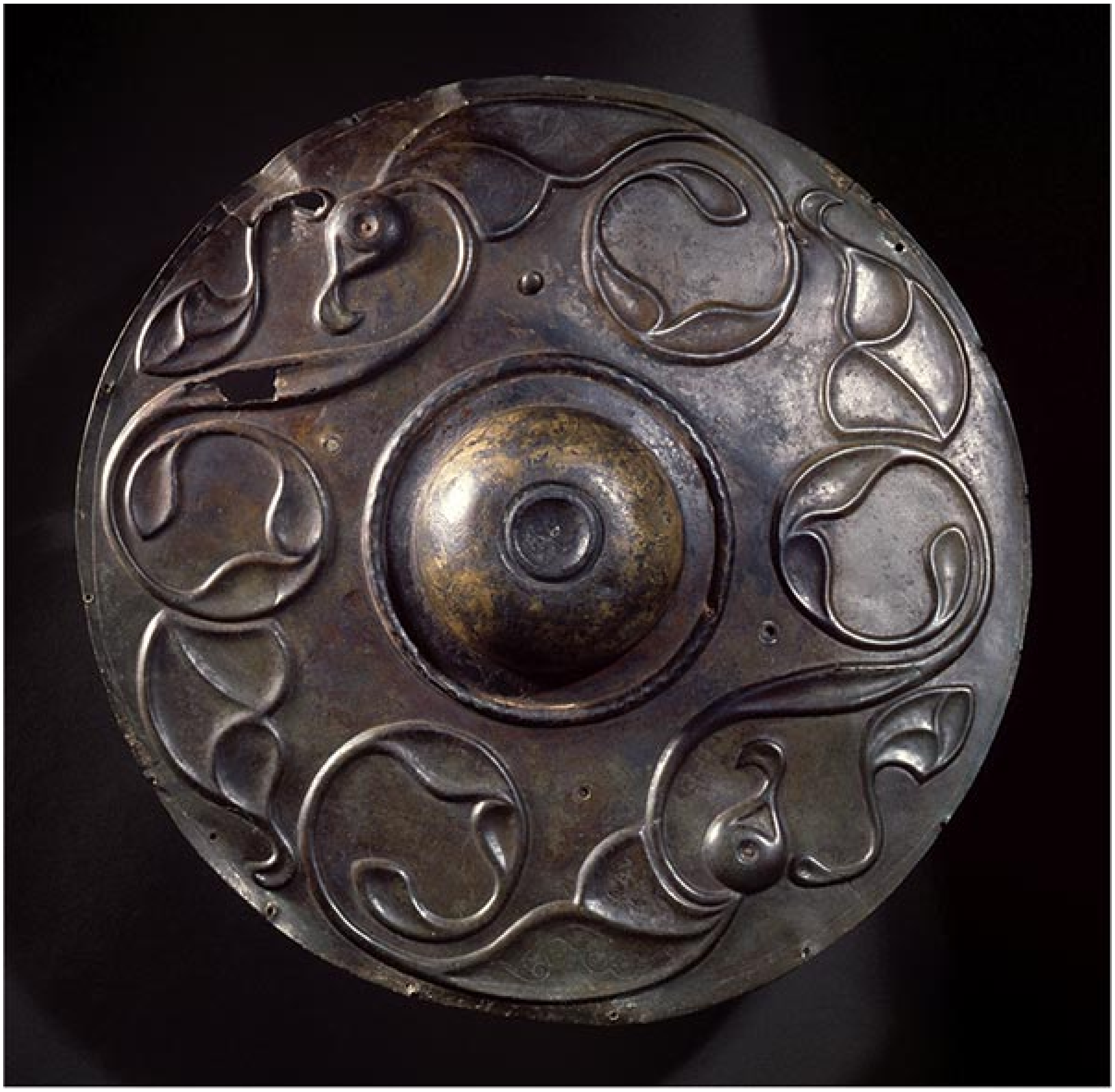
7.22 Bronze sword scabbard found at Wisbech, Cambridgeshire, England. The decoration is a rather faltering British version of the Vegetal Style and probably dates to the third century BC. Wisbech and Fenland Museum, Cambridgeshire.

Continued contact with the Continent brought to Britain items of La Tène metalwork decorated in the Vegetal Style (below, pp. 252–4). These were copied and developed by local craftsmen producing prestige goods for the elite of eastern Britain throughout the third and second centuries. For the most part it was the equipment of the warrior that was selected for embellishment, in particular sword scabbards like those from Wisbech, Cambridgeshire, Standlake, Oxfordshire, the river Witham near Lincoln, and the burial at Wetwang Slack in the Yorkshire wolds. A few decorated shields are also known, including the bosses from the Thames at Wandsworth and from the river Witham. It is also possible that the decorated pony cap from Torrs in Scotland, together with the engraved drinking-horn terminals which had at some stage been incongruously attached to it, were products of eastern British craftsmen. Most of these valuable products were dedicated to the gods of rivers, but a few accompanied prominent people to their graves. Among these we may include, in addition to the Wetwang Slack sword, a decorated canister, also from a grave at Wetwang Slack, and an armlet, from what was probably a female burial, found at Newnham Croft in Cambridgeshire. The corpus of the surviving material is impressive and leaves little doubt that the socially varied communities of eastern Britain were dominated by elites served by skilled craftsmen in much the same way as their Continental neighbours.

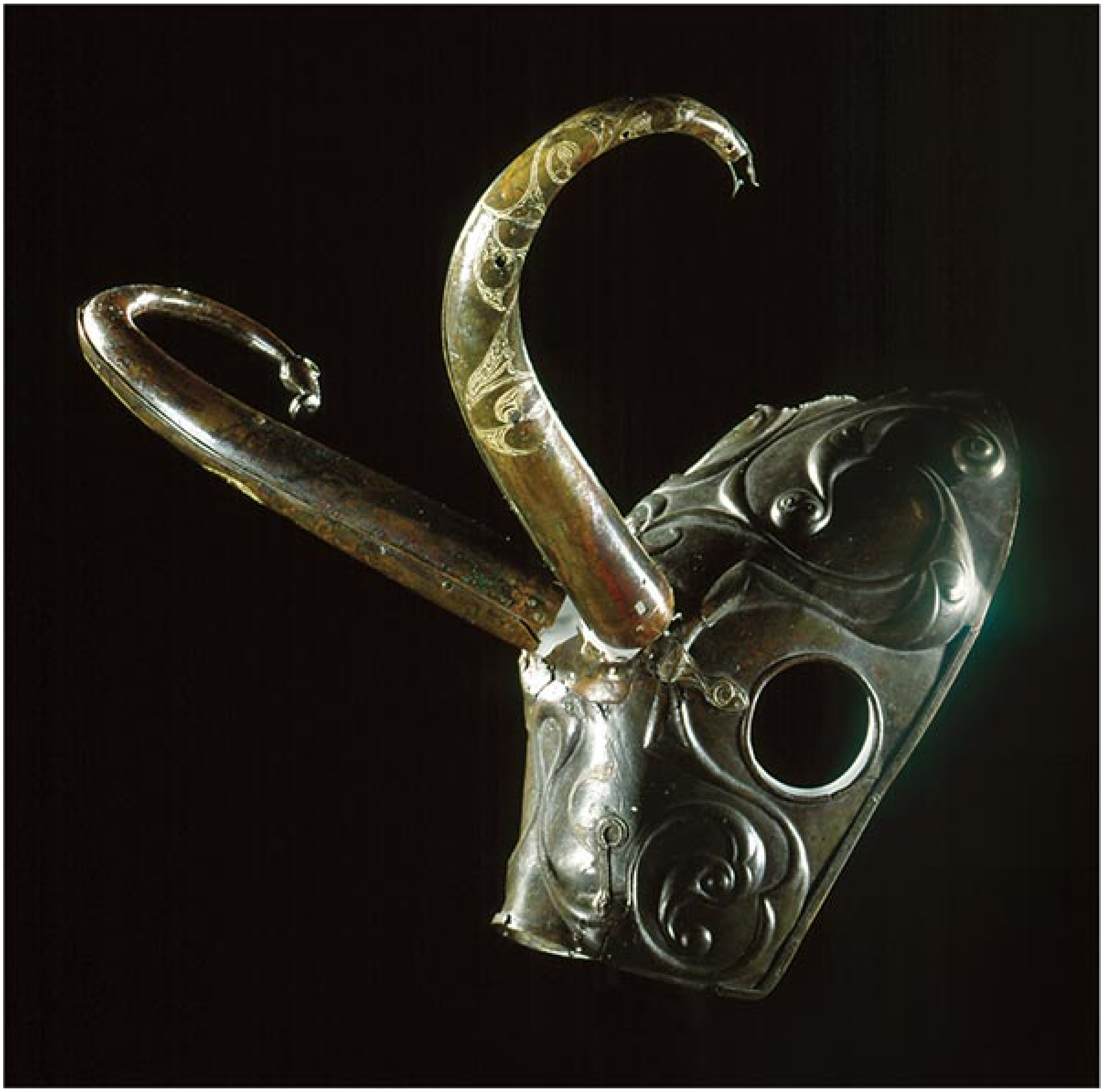
The settlement pattern throws little light on social status after the eighth century. Enclosed homesteads are known but a number of much larger and more straggling settlements have been discovered, suggesting sizeable communities, of village-like proportions and complexity. Settlements in the Yorkshire wolds have been found to extend for considerable distances along the principal trackways.



7.23 Bronze sword scabbard sheath from the river Thames at Standlake, Oxfordshire, England, showing the Vegetal Style of decoration. The basketry cross-hatching on the upper mount is typically British. Late fourth or early third century BC. Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.



7.24 (*Right top*) The river Thames has produced a spectacular array of extremely fine Iron Age metalwork, much of which was probably thrown into the water as offerings to the gods. The shield boss from Wandsworth is a considerable work of art. It is decorated in repoussé style with two large birds whose flowing wings develop into tendril motifs. Third or second century BC. British Museum, London.



7.25 (*Right bottom*) Pony cap with drinking horn terminals attached from Torrs, Dumfries and Galloway, Scotland, as originally found. The decorated terminals of the two drinking horns had been attached at some date to a repoussé-decorated pony cap. Though the context of the curious marriage of these disparate items is uncertain, the style of both elements is typical of that of a skilled school of craftsmen working in eastern Britain in the third or second century BC. National Museum of Scotland, Edinburgh.

The social systems in eastern Britain, with their elite gear and nucleated settlements, contrast noticeably with those of the west, but are closely paralleled by those of northern France and Belgium, where the distribution of prestige warrior metalwork, the vehicle burials of the

Lower Seine, the Haine, and the Ardennes, and large open settlements like Haps in the Netherlands reflect, though with regional differences, much the same overall social structure, suggesting that the communities facing the North Sea were part of a connected cultural continuum.

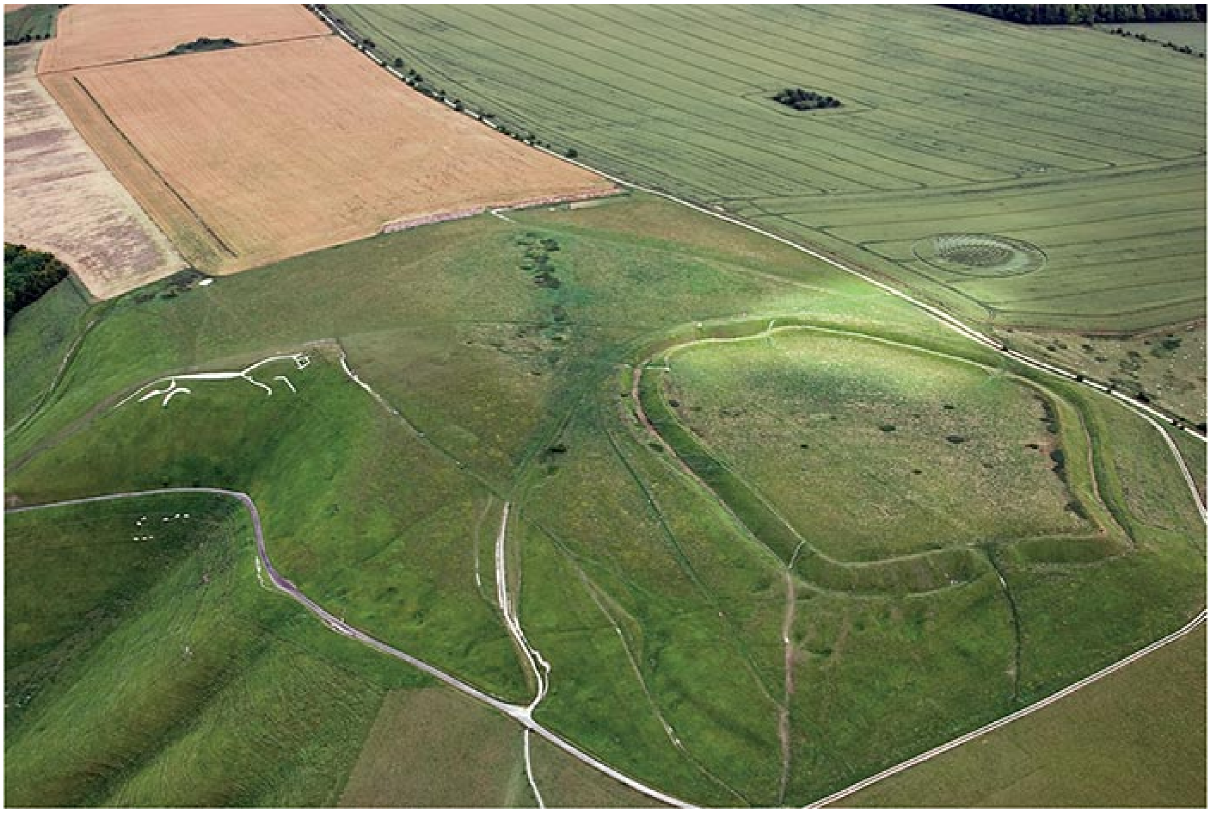
A third area of Britain—the central southern zone—presents an altogether different picture from that of both the west and the east. Its most obvious characteristic is the dominance of hillforts—hilltops of some 5–10 hectares enclosed by substantial defences, sometimes multivallate, and with elaborate entrance earthworks. The hillfort-dominated central southern zone extends from the south coast, between Devon and East Sussex, in a band of decreasing width to north Wales, with outliers spreading into Northamptonshire. It is a region of different landscapes and encompasses a number of communities demonstrating their separateness through different styles of pottery decoration; the common link between them is the hillfort.

Although a number of excavations have shown something of the variety within the general hillfort category, some generalizations can be offered. The earliest of the forts at present known, dating to the end of the Bronze Age, concentrate in the Welsh borderland, but by the sixth century the phenomenon had spread to the Wessex region, extending into the south-east (Surrey and Kent) by the third century. In some areas, such as central Wessex, it is possible to show that over time the number of forts in active use decreased, but the strength of those surviving, and the intensity of their use, was enhanced.

Functionally, the forts seem to have served their region in a variety of ways, providing central places where the different needs of the community could be articulated. Some, like Danebury and Maiden Castle, were intensively used for settlement, production, and storage on a large scale. The extent to which the forts were designed to provide defence is debatable. The enclosing earthworks and the structure of the developed gates would certainly have offered efficient protection, but there may well have been an element of display involved. However, that some were actually defended and attacked is clear from the excavated evidence. At Danebury, for example, large numbers of sling stones were hoarded on at least two separate occasions, in the third century and again in the early first, and after both phases there is evidence of burning at the gates, the last burning marking the abandonment of the fort. Other forts offer similar evidence, and at Bredon Hill in Gloucestershire the mutilated remains of bodies were found at the entrance.

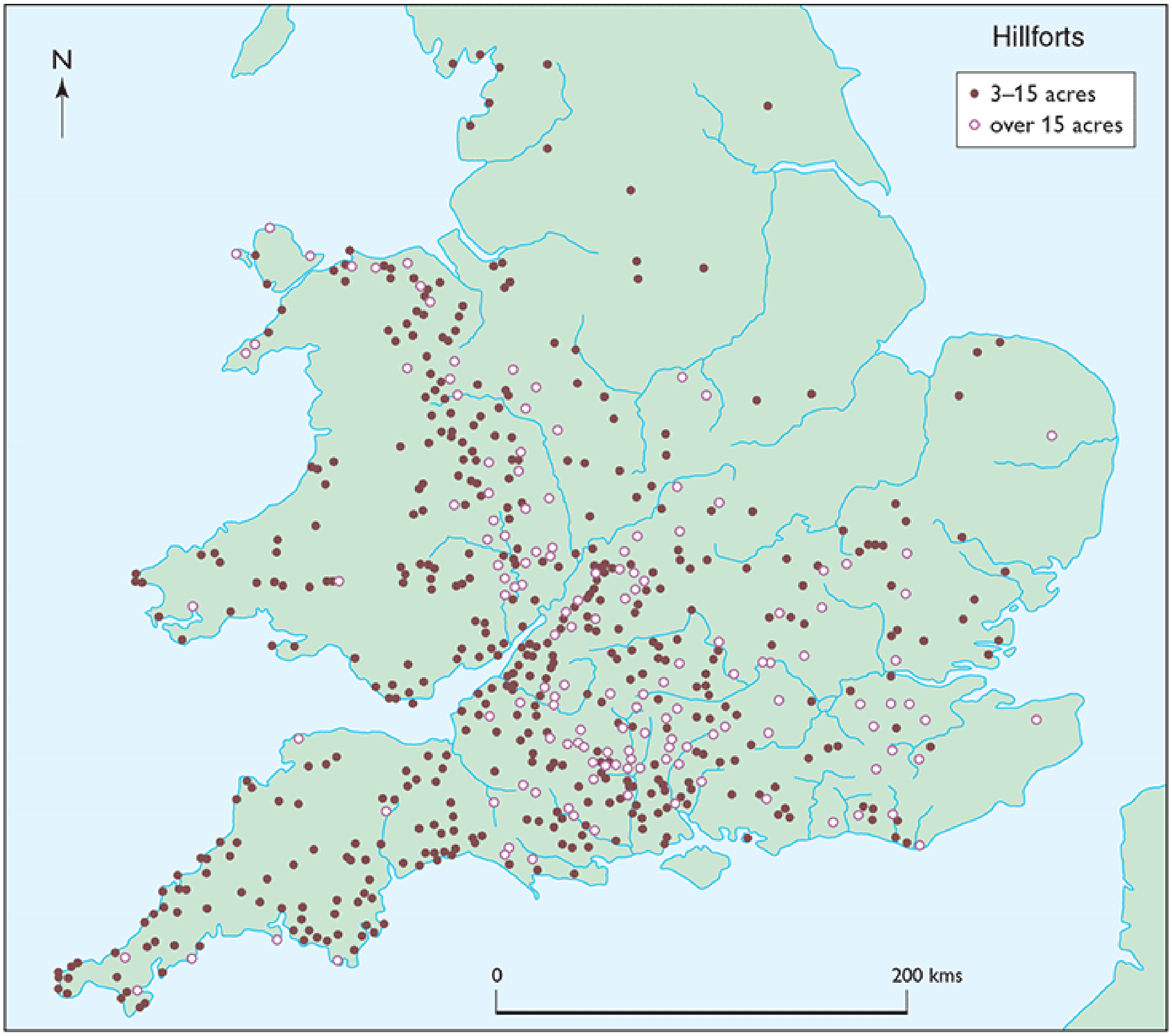
The hillforts are only one aspect of the settlement pattern. Elsewhere the contemporary countryside was densely scattered with farmsteads, many of which showed continuous occupation over centuries. Most of the farmsteads seem to have been of family size and were therefore probably centres of single estates practising mixed farming with a heavy emphasis on cereal production; a few larger agglomerations indicate a scatter of more substantial communities.

Apart from the massive nature of the hillforts, there is very little evidence in this central southern zone for a hierarchy or an elite, but the heavy emphasis on the intensive working of the land and the production of grain might indicate that status was measured by ownership of land or livestock. In the second century the two-wheeled chariot, represented by decorated bronze fittings for the vehicle and the bronze harness attachments for the horses, becomes far more evident. Whether the vehicle was simply an indication of status or a means of warfare is impossible to say, but most likely it served as both. The virtual absence of elaborate weaponry is at first sight puzzling, but it could be that this was simply a reflection of the fact that prestige weapons were not consigned to rivers or burials within this region and therefore stood less chance of survival.



7.26 The Iron Age hillfort of Uffington Castle, Oxfordshire, England, with the carved hill figure—the White Horse of Uffington—nearby. The hillfort was constructed in the sixth or fifth century BC and subsequently modified when one of its gates was blocked. The hill figure has been suggested, on the basis of some scientific dating evidence, to be a little earlier in origin.

The developments in central southern Britain are in marked contrast to those in the west and east. One possible explanation is that the central southern zone was a border region between the metal-producing west and the warrior elites of the east. The instability of such a region, perhaps under threat of continuous raids from the eastern zone, may well have led to the need to develop and maintain fortifications. Similar hillfort-dominated zones dating to the fourth to second centuries can be seen elsewhere in west central Europe, especially in the region between Trier and the Rhineland, where again it could be their border position, between the fully developed La Tène warrior elites in the south and zones with totally different socio-economic systems to the north, that created a marcher society.



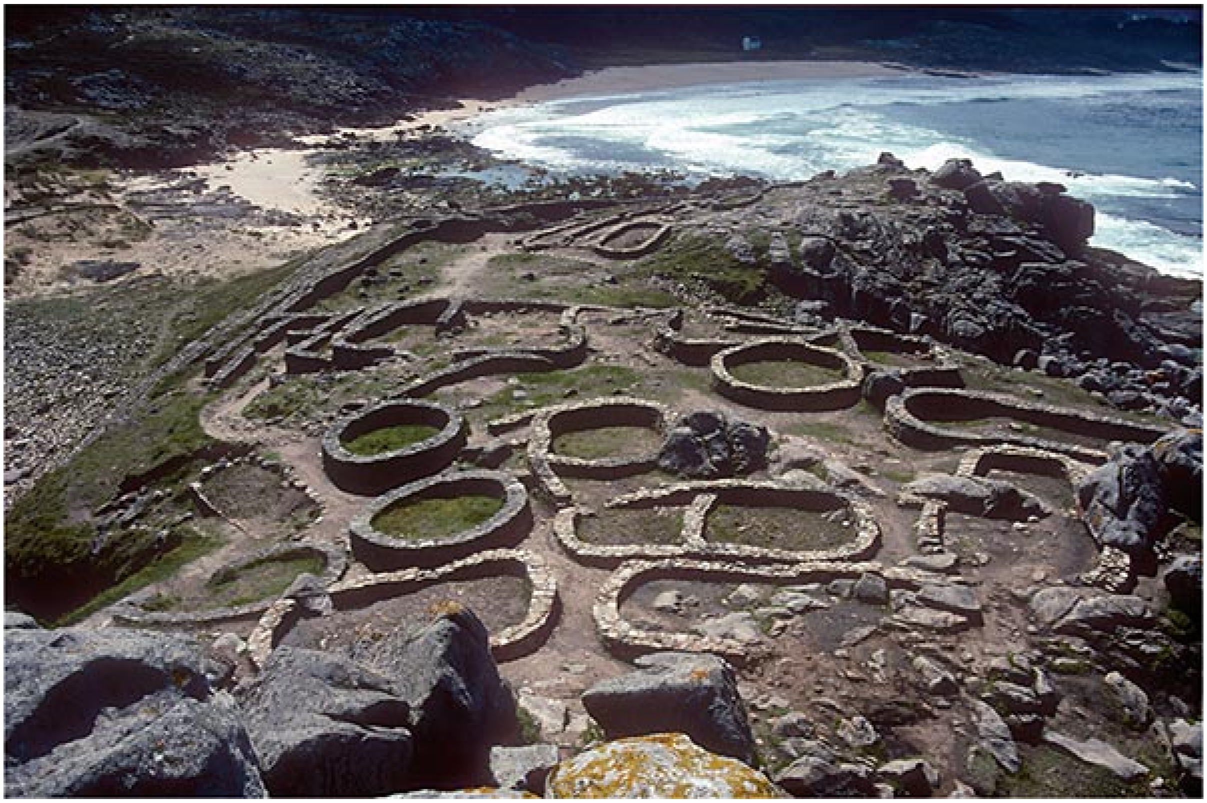
7.27 In central southern Britain, in a zone spreading from the south coast of England to the north of Wales, strongly defended hillforts dominated the Iron Age landscape in the period from the sixth to first centuries BC. Not all hillforts were in use for the whole time. After the early third century a few sites rose to dominance while the rest were abandoned. The hillfort-dominated zone may have been a 'marcher' area between the Atlantic communities of the west and the more socially complex communities of the eastern zone.

The Communities of South-western Gaul and Western Iberia

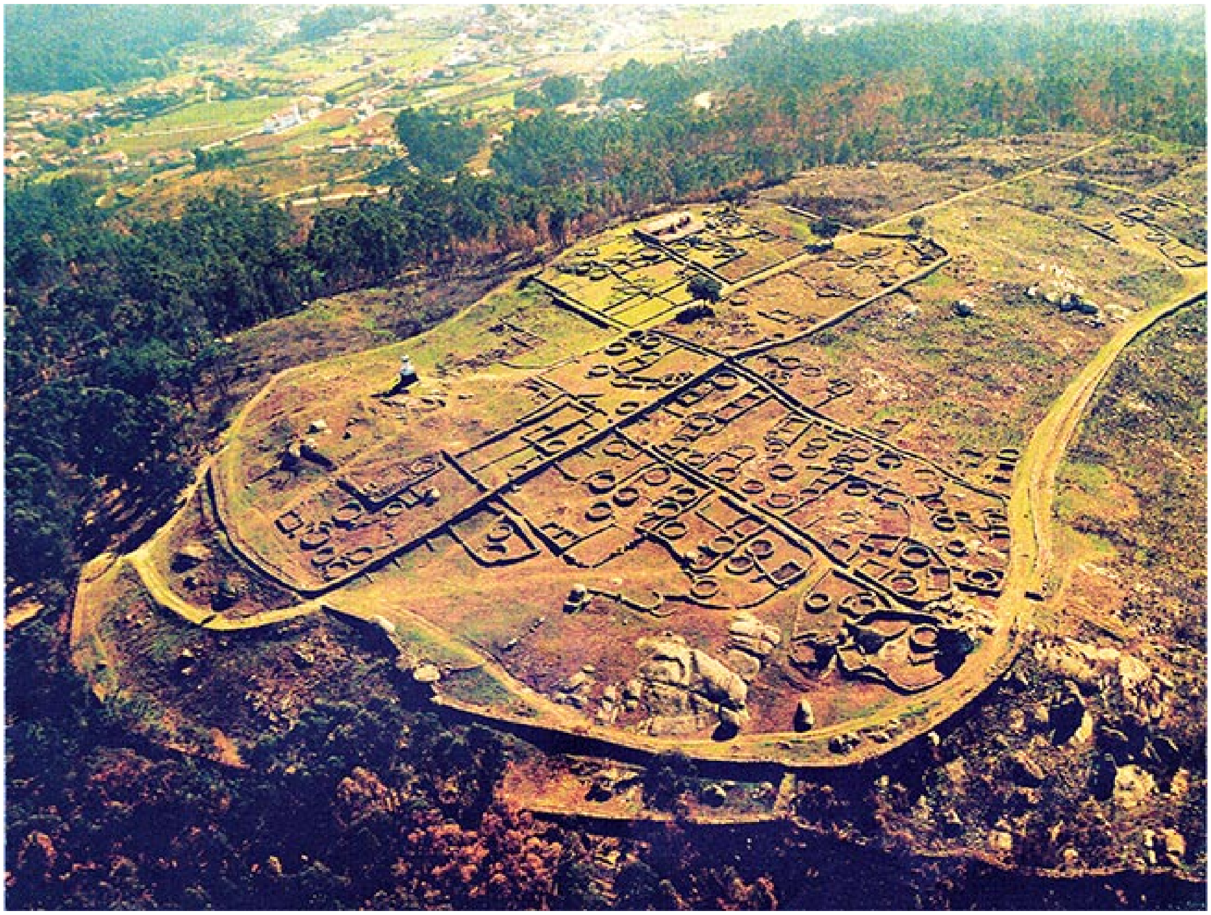
The western coastal area of France from the Charente southwards to the Pyrenees has produced a varied range of archaeological evidence for the period 1300–200 BC. It is, however, clear from the distribution of Late Bronze Age tools and weapons that the region played a significant part in the networks of exchange during this period, and the Garonne–Gironde axis provided an easy route linking the Atlantic to the Mediterranean. It was certainly an important corridor for the transhipment of tin after the sixth century.

In the sixth and fifth centuries a distinctive Aquitanian culture can be recognized, largely from the evidence of cremation cemeteries. Grave goods included local versions of anthropoid-hilted swords and fibulae with elongated springs and ornamented feet. Although both types are local products, they were evidently inspired by widely distributed west central European forms. What is more significant perhaps is the general similarities which the Aquitanian forms share with those south of the Pyrenees in north-west and north central Iberia. The two regions must have shared systems of exchange linking them through the western Pyrenean passes.

The discovery of a remarkable series of gold torcs in Haute-Garonne, Tarn, and Gironde, dating to the third and second centuries, decorated in an exuberant form of plastic art, has been linked to the possible migration of Tectosages in the aftermath of the Celtic expedition into Greece (above, p. 147). Whatever the origin of the inspiration for these pieces (and Middle Danube parallels can be quoted), they are likely to have been of local manufacture, utilizing gold extracted from the gold-rich sands of the Tarn valley. The social context of these items is obscure, but their discovery in hoards suggests a religious motivation for their deposition, although this does not exclude their production under elite patronage.



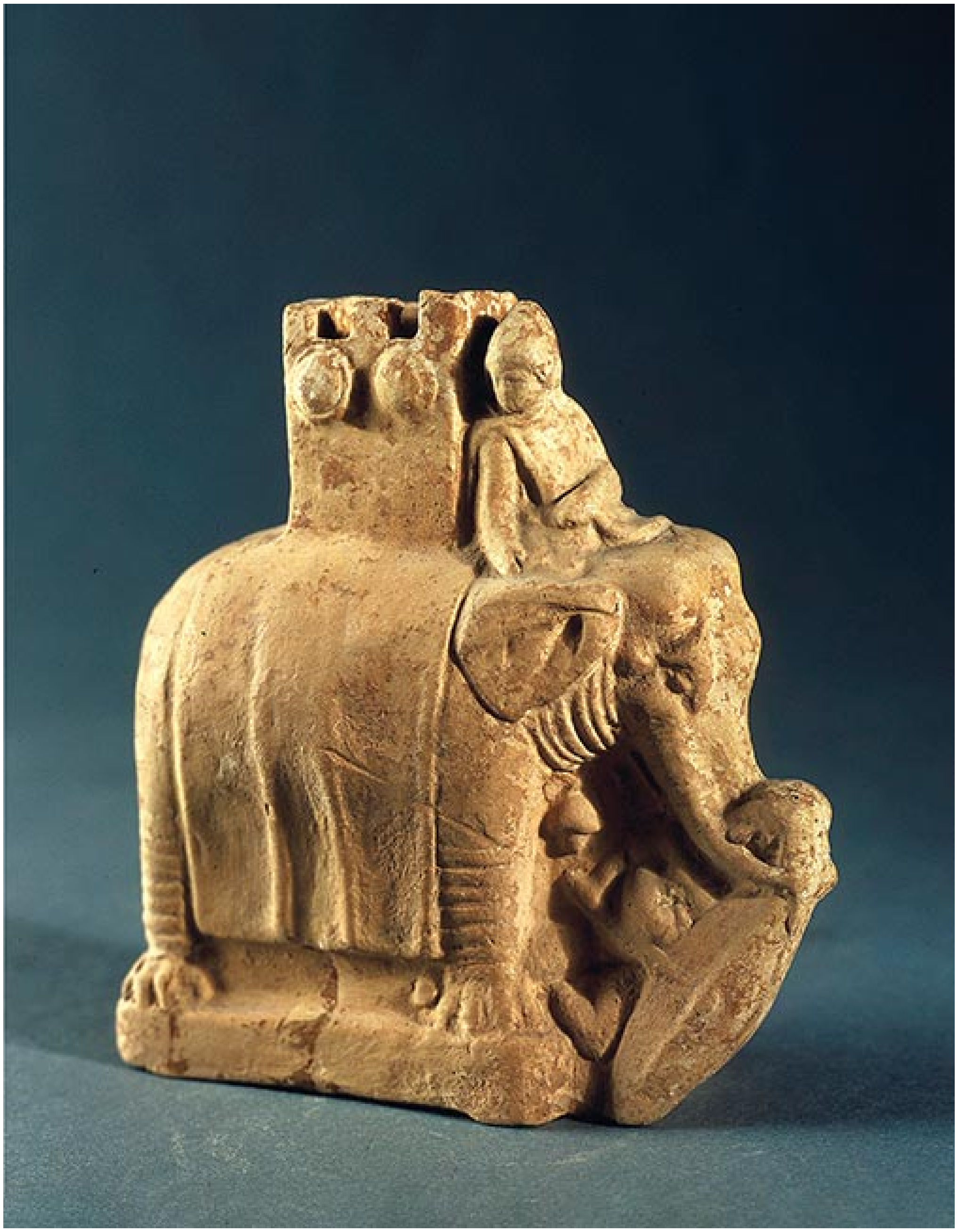
7.28 The fortified coastal settlement of Castro de BaroÃ±a on the RÃa de Muros e Noia, Galicia. The circular houses are characteristic of north-western Iberian castros.



7.29 The *oppidum* of CitÃ¢nia de Sanfins, PaÃ§os de Ferreira, Portugal, is one of the best known of the castros of northern Portugal and north-west Spain. The defences enclose an area of 15 hectares. The careful internal planning is based on a main north–south street with side streets dividing the interior into eighteen rectangular ‘insulae’, which are subdivided into smaller units for the individual households. Regular planning of this type was learned from the Romans, who, by the end of the second century BC, had established themselves over much of Iberia. The individual houses of circular plan and their method of construction were, however, entirely native.

In Iberia, as we saw in Chapter 4, Phoenician, Carthaginian, and Greek cultures made a significant impact on much of the south and east of the peninsula. In the extreme north-west, in present-day Galicia, however, a distinctive culture developed. The area is rich in metals, especially tin and gold (above, p. 75), for both of which it became famous in the ancient world. Its cultural links were, traditionally, Atlantic, although during the first millennium a series of closer contacts developed with the Celtiberian peoples of the interior. The socio-economic system seems to have become warrior-based, the most evident settlements being the fortified hilltop enclosures, known locally as castros, which led to its archaeological designation as the Castro culture. Stone-built round houses, which dominate the settlement pattern, and the use of *chevaux de frise* around some of the castros have been used to stress the cultural links between Galicia and the northern areas of the Atlantic province, but how significant these structural similarities are it is difficult to judge. Recent work on the Castro culture has shown it to have been an indigenous development rooted in the second millennium. Many settlements originated in the period 1000–700 BC at a time when maritime links generated by the exchange of metals were strong. From about 900 BC Phoenician influences show that the indigenous culture was coming increasingly into contact with Mediterranean systems. After the middle of the millennium regional differentiation becomes apparent among the settlements, and at some the extension of their boundaries suggests an increase in population. Parallel with this it is possible to detect an increase in both male and female prestige goods and the appearance of rather closer cultural links with the communities of the Meseta which might be related to the folk movements of the Turduli and Celti towards the north-west referred to by Strabo. Increasing contact with the Roman world, particularly after the campaign of Decimus Brutus in the region in 138–136 BC, provided the stimulus for further change. It was at this time that those settlements in favoured positions began to take on distinctly urban characteristics, with well-defined street grids and public open spaces.

Taken together, the array of disparate evidence for the communities of the Atlantic zone, presented in summary here, emphasizes the highly individual nature of each of the major regions within this broad Celtic-speaking zone. The maritime links, which bound them in systems of reciprocal exchange, waxed and waned as internal and external stimuli exercised their different effects. Superimposed upon this was a network of east–west contacts, linking the Atlantic to the developments of the La Tène cultural heartland of west central Europe. Each of the Atlantic cultures responded in an individual way, maintaining its special identity.



8

Celts and Others on the Eastern Fringes

THE classical sources and the archaeological evidence taken together leave little doubt that by the end of the fourth century BC Celtic communities were well established in the lands of the Middle Danube and some groups seem to have moved eastwards from the Tisza into Transylvania. As a generalization we can regard the Carpathian mountain range, which swings in a broad arc south then west to join the mountains of the Balkans, as the effective limit of expansion by the mid-fourth century. The Iron Gates—the gorge through which the Danube flows from its middle reaches to the lower part of its valley, where it now defines much of the border between Serbia and Romania—was still, at this stage, closed to Celtic expansion.

Eastern Europe before the Celts

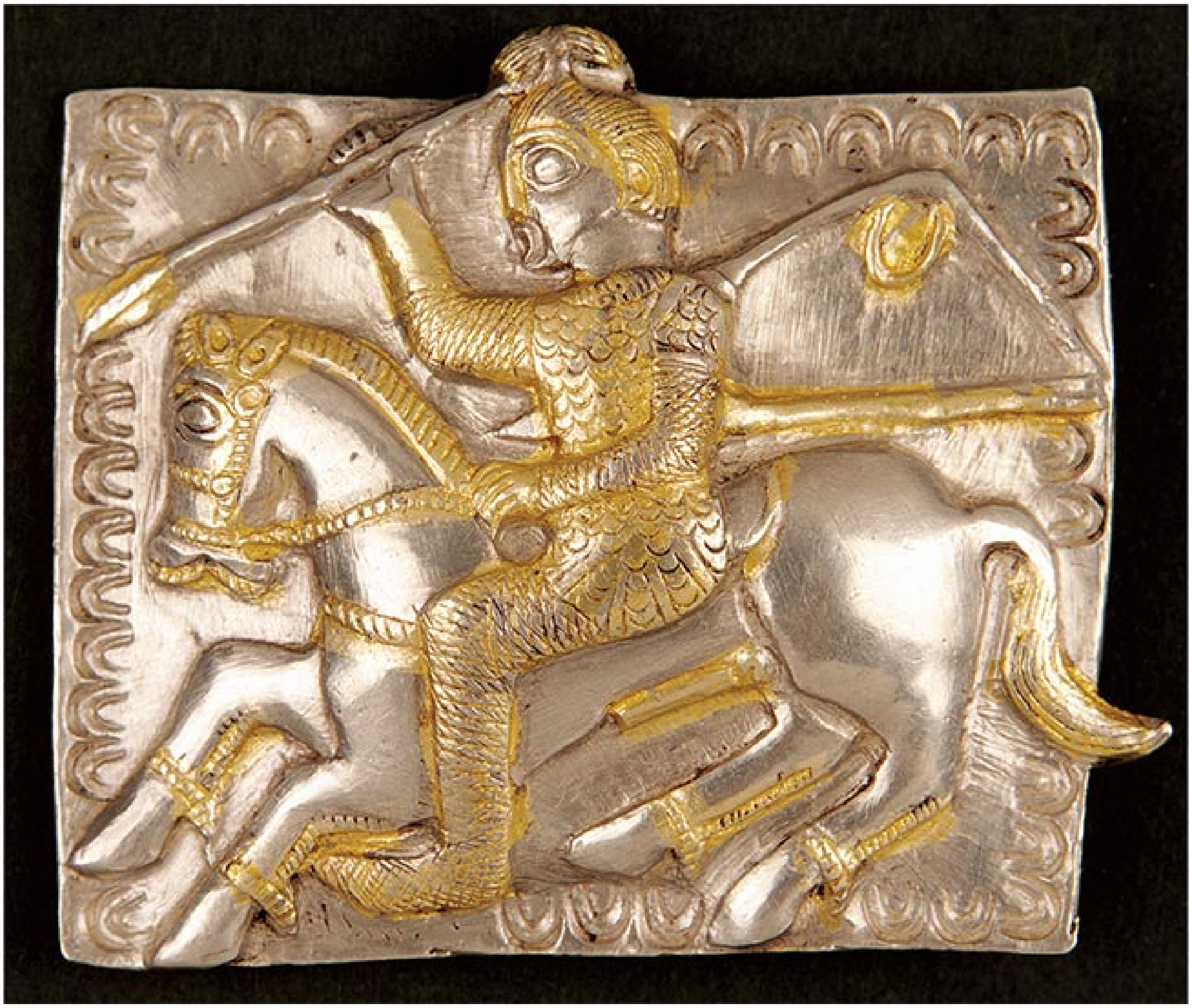
The cultural development of eastern and south-eastern Europe beyond this mountain barrier was complex. The most potent force was, of course, that of the Greek city-states, which, standing together in the period 513–479 BC, had managed to halt the western advance of the Persian armies under first Darius and later Xerxes. This episode, which saw a massive Persian presence in the Lower Danube valley for much of the forty years of threat, had a significant effect on the development of Thracian society. The

Persian Grand Army moved with its treasure and its finery and an entourage of craftsmen who could serve the needs of the elite. Inevitably the Thracians were to learn much from their example: eastern values and the accompanying symbolism were adopted and adapted by the local craftsmen to serve their own masters, and there emerged a highly distinctive regional style of aristocratic metalwork in silver and silver-gilt, blending ideas derived from the nomadic cultures of the steppe and from the Greek cities which fringed the western shores of the Black Sea. Thracian art, in its fourth- to second-century manifestation, was the eastern counterpart of Celtic art and is its equal as one of the great indigenous artistic developments of late prehistoric Europe.

The Greek cities of the western Black Sea coast provided an interface with the Greek world through which a wide range of raw materials and products could be exchanged. After the Persian incident, trade intensified: corn, slaves, furs, and metals flowed out of the Thracian hinterland and wine and prestige goods of Greek manufacture flowed in. As Thucydides noted, ‘you can accomplish nothing with the Thracians without giving gifts’. It was a situation with many parallels in the west Mediterranean and in Iberia, and it was during this period that the Thracian elite began to become archaeologically recognizable through their elaborate burials richly furnished with the accoutrements of status and wealth. Competition for status would frequently have expressed itself in raiding and more extended bouts of warfare. The impression given by the prestige metalwork of the period is of an elite intimately involved with feasting and hunting. These pursuits—statements of nobility and prowess—were as much a part of the Thracian social fabric as the raid was of the Celtic.

By the beginning of the fourth century BC it is possible to identify distinct ‘kingdoms’ and their kings. One of the most powerful were the Odrysae of central Thrace, whose close links with Athens, both political and economic, contributed to their strength and ascendancy. In the early fourth century one of their kings, Kotys, seems to have been acknowledged by other lesser polities as having extensive powers beyond the territorial limits of his own kingdom.

The broadly defined Thracian culture, within which at this stage we can include other specific groups such as the Getae and Dacians, extended northwards along the coast of the Black Sea into Moldova. Beyond this in the Pontic steppe, stretching around the northern shores of the Black Sea, a somewhat different cultural configuration was developing which can, for convenience, be called Scythian or Scytho-Sarmatian. We saw earlier (pp. 96–7) that this region had been occupied by nomadic and semi-nomadic groups known to the classical writers as Cimmerians but that during the eighth century BC they were coming under increasing pressure from groups living on the Volga who, historically, were called Scythians. The story told by Herodotus of the replacement of the Cimmerians by the Scythians may have involved little more than the movement of a Scythian elite westwards into the northern Pontic zone. What is clear, however, is that the eighth and early seventh centuries were a period of upheaval and folk movement which resulted in hordes of dislocated horse-riding warriors, distinguished as Cimmerians and Scythians by contemporary sources, pouring through the Caucasus southwards into Asia Minor, where they became involved as mercenaries and freebooters in the struggle between the Assyrians and the kingdom of Urartu.



8.1 Bridal decoration in silver-gilt from Letnitsa, Bulgaria, showing a Thracian rider wearing scale armour. The rider’s hair is tied in a topknot—a style noted as Thracian by Homer in *The Iliad*. The horseman warrior, sometimes a rider god, is a frequent motif in Thracian art. Narodnija archeologicˇeski musej, Sofia.

By the sixth century the Royal Scyths were firmly established in the Crimea and in the steppe zone to the north, and through the Greek colony of Olbia at the mouth of the Bug had developed close contacts with the Greek world, with which a lively trade had developed. The highly skilled craftsmen working throughout the length of this Greek interface produced a range of exquisite items, usually in gold, for the Scythian elite who were buried in the great royal tombs such as Čertomlyk and Solocha. When Herodotus visited Olbia about 450 BC, he was able to observe Scythian culture at first hand and to provide a vivid description of the complex processes involved in the burial of the Royal Scyths.

Scythian culture developed a distinctive and original character in the sixth and fifth centuries, and many aspects of this northern Pontic culture spread south, to be absorbed into the eclectic culture of the Thracian tribes, and west into the Middle Danube region, especially into the Great Hungarian Plain and Transylvania. These influences may have been the result of the migratory movements of populations or elites or simply of intensifying systems of exchange. By the fifth century, however, many of the communities of the Great Hungarian Plain, extending westwards along the Danube into Slovakia, had adopted a style of horse-riding and a material culture which bore many similarities to that of the people living around the Black Sea fringe.

The pattern of folk movement from the east, reflected in the early movement of Scythians from the Volga to the northern Pontic zone, was repeated again at the end of the fifth century BC, when the Sauromatae (Sarmatians), who emerged as an ethnically distinct group in the region east of the Don, moved westwards into Scythian territory. One classical text, Pseudo-Hippocrates, suggests that this expansion took place about 400 BC. Certainly, by 338 another text, Pseudo-Scylax, could refer to the *Syrmatai* as the tribe now occupying the old Scythian lands west of the Don. That the transference of power was not peaceful is suggested by the archaeological evidence, which shows that a number of Scythian settlements on the Lower Dnieper were destroyed in the late fifth or early fourth century. While there may well not have been a significant replacement of population, it is clear that the Scythian elite—the Royal Scyths—were ousted from much of the territory; some retained power in the Crimea while others established themselves in the region of Dobruja at the mouth of the Danube, whence it seems that forays were made deeper into Thracian lands. What emerged in the Pontic steppe was a complex culture deeply rooted in indigenous systems which can best be called Scytho-Sarmatian.

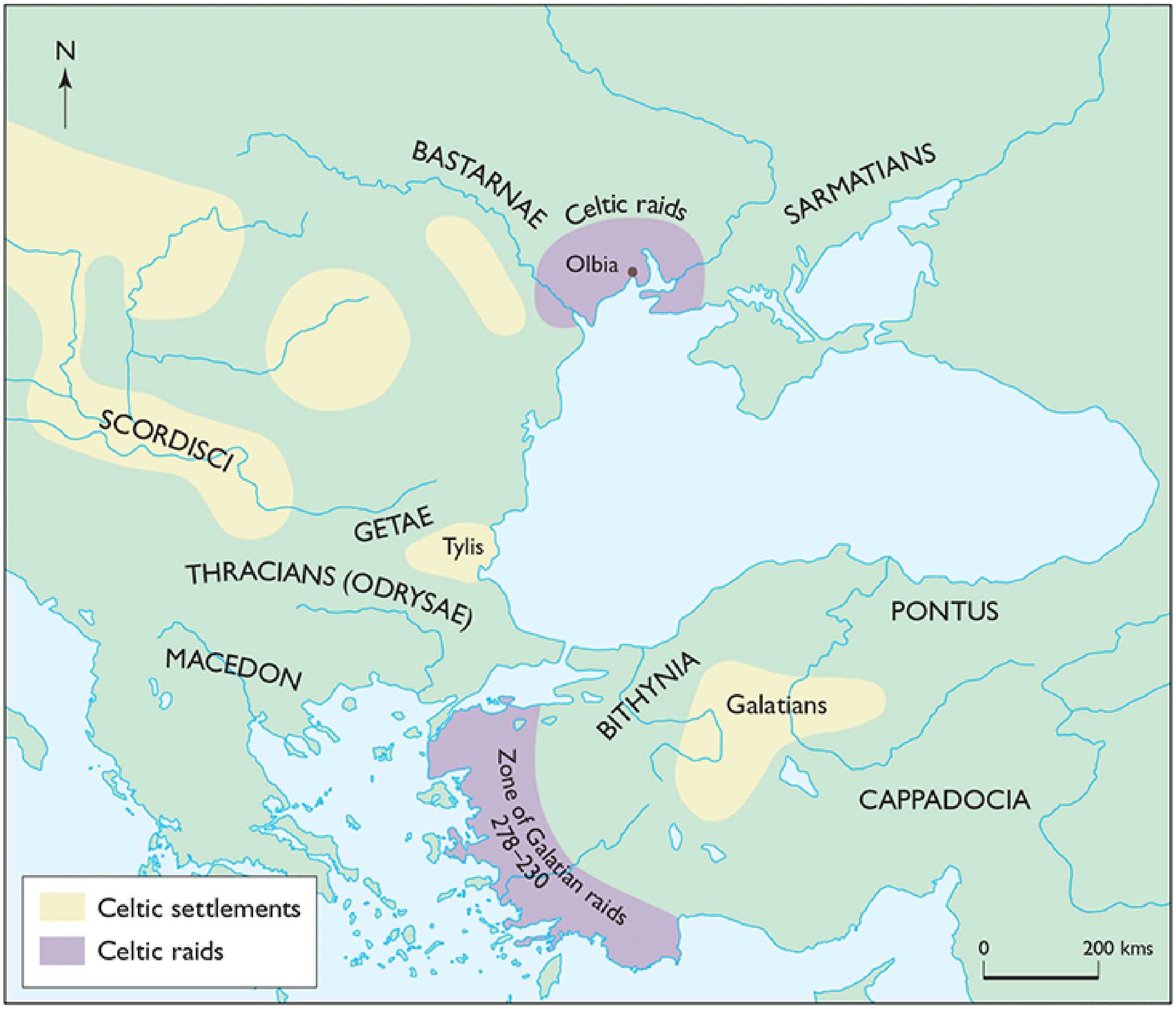
The political and social upheaval around 400 BC dislocated the economic systems which sustained the port city of Olbia. Cut off from its traditional customers on the mid-Dnieper and from the exchange networks which brought raw materials from the Urals and beyond, the city suffered a decline, though it maintained control of the coastal strip between the estuaries of the Dnieper and the Dniester.

The growth of Macedon as a significant political and military force in the area began in the mid-fourth century BC, when, under Philip II (359–336 BC), Macedonia began to expand northwards into Thrace. Expansion was continued by Alexander, who, in 335 BC, crossed the Danube to lead his armies against the Getae. It was on this occasion that his famous meeting with the embassy of Celtic chieftains took place. After Alexander's departure to the east in 334 the Macedonian interest in the north continued, and in 331 (or 326) detachments of Scytho-Sarmatians came to the aid of Olbia when Zopyrion, one of Alexander's generals, then governor of Thrace, mounted an attack on the now weakened city.

In the political and social chaos which followed Alexander's death in 323 the Macedonian hold on Thrace collapsed. The power vacuum was to some extent filled by the rise of the Thracian tribe the Odrysae, who, under their king Seuthes III, made good use of their central position in the Balkans to command the trade which was intensifying with Greece, particularly along the Maritsa valley route. Even so the sudden demise of the power of Macedon, which had to a large extent held south-eastern Europe in a state of stable equilibrium, created an entirely changed situation which, as described in Chapter 6, provided new opportunities for Celtic expansion.

Asia Minor before the Celts

In Asia Minor the ethnic and political situation was no less complex. In the period of turmoil which followed the collapse of the Mycenaean system, migrating communities moved from Europe into Asia Minor, trekking across the Hellespont or sailing the Aegean. It was in this way that the early Greeks established their colonies along the Aegean coast. One of the migrating groups was the Phrygians, whose homeland is thought to have been Thrace. It is possible that they were involved in the destruction of Troy VIIa and the Hittite capital of Hattusa about 1180 BC at the time of their settlement in north central Asia Minor. They became archaeologically recognizable by the middle of the eighth century, and in the period *c.*725–675 BC the Phrygian empire had developed into a regional power under King Midas, with its capital at Gordion. The stability of the area was undermined by the conflicts between Assyria and Urartu and by the incursions of horse-riding hordes from the Pontic steppe (the Cimmerians and Scythians) at the beginning of the seventh century (above, pp. 96–7). At this time Gordion was destroyed by Cimmerians and the power of the Phrygians collapsed. Many factors contributed to the Phrygian decline: the rise of the Greek cities on the west and north coasts, the landlocked nature of Phrygian territory, the comparatively poor quality of the land, and the eventual dominance of Persia. By the third century they were regarded as effete, good only at embroidery and best used as slaves.


N
BASTARNAE
Celtic raids
SARMATIANS
Olbia
SCORDISCI
GETAE
Tylis
THRACIANS (ODRYSAE)
MACEDON
BITHYNIA
Galatians
PONTUS
CAPPADOCIA
Zone of Galatian raids 278–230
Celtic settlements
Celtic raids
0
200 kms

8.2 Map to illustrate the principal areas of Celtic settlement in eastern Europe and Asia Minor and the neighbouring political or tribal entities.

The degree of stability which had been maintained in Asia Minor by the Persian domination after the mid-sixth century was finally shattered by Alexander's 'liberation' and by the chaos of rivalries left in the wake of Alexander's death. After *c.*330 BC Asia Minor, like the Balkans and the Pontic zone, was destabilized to such an extent that migrant Celts would find little resistance and even, in some regions, a misguided welcome. This opportunity, together with continued population pressures in their homelands, were two of the more significant factors that encouraged the eastern advance of the Celtic tribes.

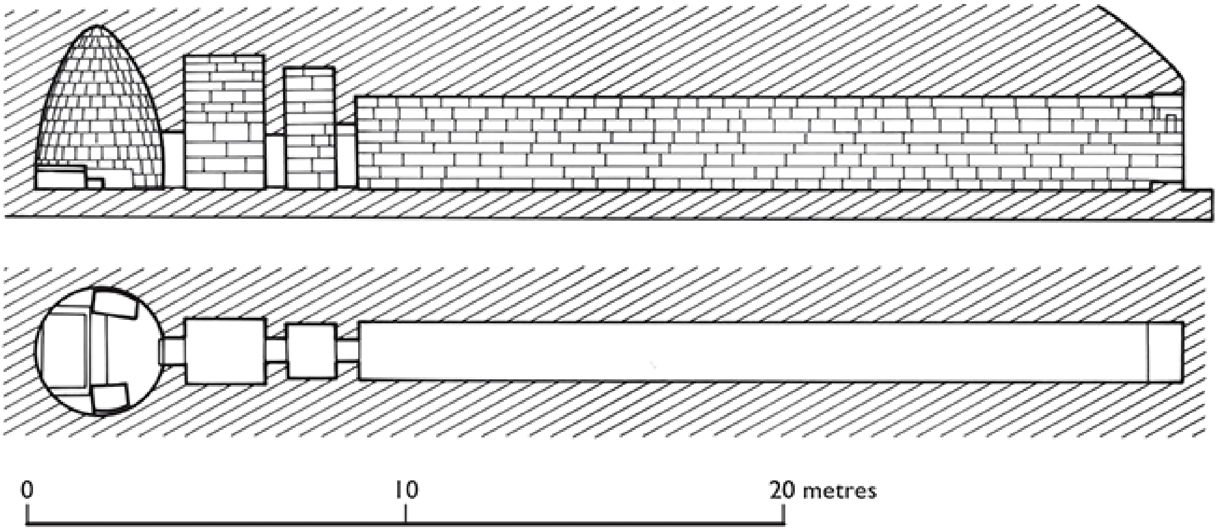
In Chapter 6 we outlined the main historical framework for the Celtic presence in the east. Populations and bands of fighting men moved comparatively freely over large territories. They came from the mid-Danube region, and, while identified as Celts by the historical sources, or more usually Gauls or Galatians, they are likely to have been of mixed ethnicity. Intermarriage and allegiances will undoubtedly have made the Celts who moved into the Balkans and Asia Minor significantly different from those who a century earlier had penetrated the Po valley. None the less, since they were recognized as Celtic by their contemporaries and as some at least appear to have spoken a Celtic language, we may legitimately consider them here.

Celtic Settlement in Thrace

The Celtic expansion from the Middle Danube was under way in the early third century. In 281 BC, in a major thrust to the south and east, the capital of the Odrysae at Seuthopolis was sacked and the way was clear for the historic attack on Delphi. It was in the aftermath of the expedition into Greece that a Celtic settlement, the kingdom of Tylis, was established in Thrace (above, p. 148). According to Polybius, the kingdom was not far from Byzantium, but a later source, Stephen of Byzantium, says that Tylis was further away, near Mount Balkan. It is difficult to offer greater precision and the thin scatter of items of La Tène metalwork is no sure guide. Indeed it is possible that throughout the third century the Celts maintained a high degree of mobility within a much larger territory. Certainly in 227 BC one group had reached Chersonesos (Gallipoli) but was defeated by Antigonos II. At any event, Celtic power in Thrace was finally destroyed in 213–212 BC.

Since the Celtic presence in Thrace lasted for only two generations, it is unlikely to have left any substantial trace, nor is there any reason to suppose that its material culture was closely comparable to that of the west central European La Tène culture. The few La Tène objects recovered from Thrace need be little more than gifts arriving by exchange from the west, and their distribution does not necessarily reflect that of the Celtic group.

One outstanding discovery does, however, deserve mention. At Mezek, in the valley of the Maritsa river, which runs south through the Rhodope mountains, a settlement and cemetery were discovered. The principal tomb was a tholos type, with a circular corbelled chamber (the tholos proper) reached by a long passage, or *dromos*, the entire structure being embedded within a substantial tumulus. The style of the burial is Thracian, its architectural refinement being the result of techniques coming ultimately from the Greek world. The original burial, dating to the end of the fourth century BC, is likely to have been of a Thracian chieftain but the tomb was later used for a second burial in the third century. The new interment was accompanied by a group of decorated bronze fittings appropriate to a chariot, which may well have been placed in the grave in its entirety. Stylistically the fittings are Celtic and may be paralleled by contemporary material found in Bohemia and Moravia.



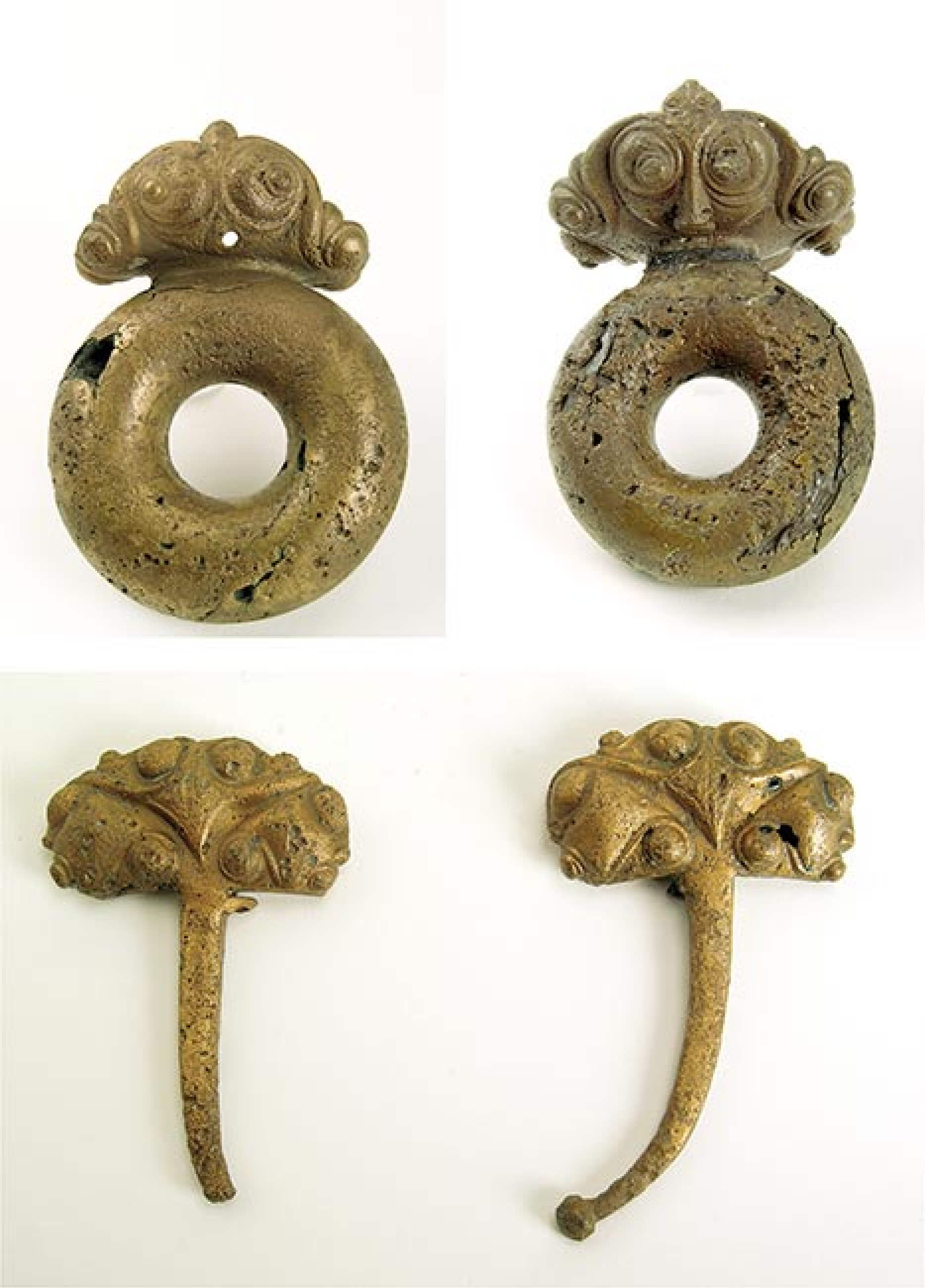
8.3 The Thracian tholos tomb of Mal Tepe, Mezek, Bulgaria. It was possibly reused for a Celtic burial in the third century BC.

The Mezek chariot burial, if such it is, nicely points up the problem. Was it the burial of a Celtic chieftain complete with chariot, his lineage laying claim to territorial legitimacy by choosing an indigenous royal tomb for the interment? Was the chariot rather a diplomatic gift from a Celt to a Thracian, or was it a Celtic chariot captured by a Thracian? There is, of course, no certain answer, but the questions highlight the complex of relationships between Celt and Thracian in the region during the third century. The absence of any systematic body of archaeological evidence and the lack of anything more than a few passing references in contemporary sources make it difficult to assess the nature or extent of Celtic settlement in Thrace or of its impact on Thracian culture.

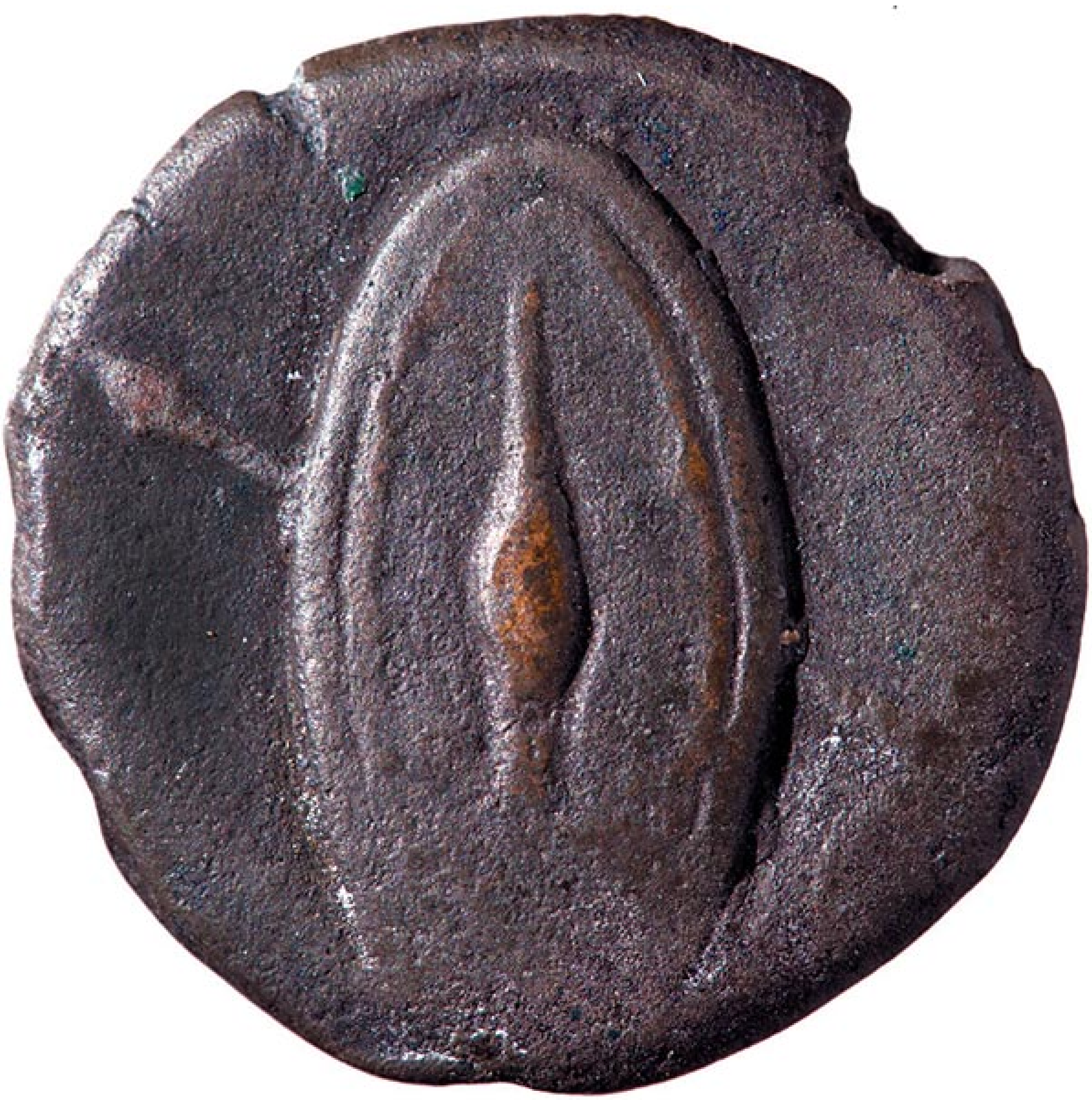
Celts in the Pontic Region

That groups of Celts moved east of the Carpathians into the Ukraine and Moldova now seems tolerably certain, since their presence is specifically mentioned on a marble inscription from Olbia put up in honour of Protogenes. It is dated to the late third or early second century BC but may well be referring to events earlier in the third century—a time of great instability in the region. It records that ‘the Galatians and Scirians had formed a union and had assembled large forces and intended to arrive in the winter’ and that ‘the Thisamatiae, Scythians, and Saudaratae, who were likewise afraid of the Galatians’ savagery, sought shelter within the city walls’. Protogenes, one of the wealthy inhabitants of the city, had been honoured by an inscription for his paying for the building of a defensive wall along the previously unprotected river and port side of the city.

Additional evidence of a Celtic presence is provided by a number of Celto-Illyrian hydronyms and place names such as Gallitsyja and Galich found in western Ukraine which are suggestive of settlement on a more permanent basis than that of merely a roving war band.



8.4 Linchpin and other fittings from the third-century BC burial in the Thracian tomb at Mezek, Bulgaria. Narodnija archeologičeski musej, Sofia.



8.5 Bronze coin of the Bosporan king Leucon II. Although the symbols are the subject of debate, the shield resembles the Celtic-style long shield. The use of these weapons as symbols could reflect an unrecorded event when Celtic peoples came into contact with the Bosporan kingdom. National Museum, Moscow.

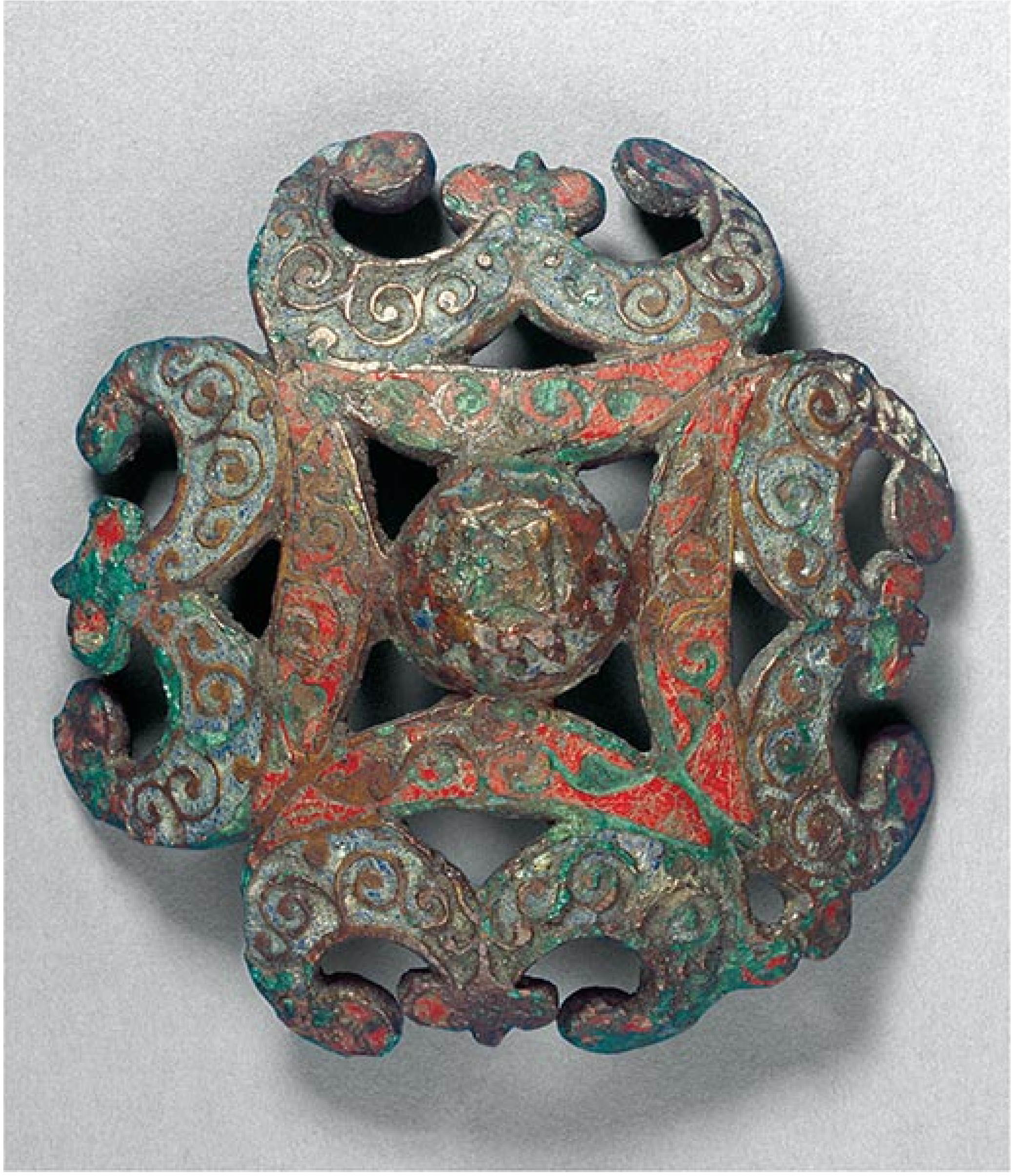
The archaeological record is also informative, producing an array of La Tène metalwork, mainly brooches and bracelets, of which a significant number came from Scythian graves (Map 22). Among the more diagnostic of the metalwork are items belonging to the Duchcov–Münsingen phase dating from the mid-fourth century to roughly the middle of the third century, spanning the period of the historical migrations of the Celts into Greece and Asia Minor.

If we accept the presence of a Celtic population in the Moldova–Ukraine region, the question arises, from which direction did they come? One possibility is that it was a northwards move from Thrace, but it is equally possible that the penetration came from the west from the area of Celtic settlement in Transylvania. At any event it was probably the state of disruption caused by the Sarmatian destruction of Great Scythia that provided the Celts with their opportunity. Another group which took advantage of these troubled times was the Bastarnae, probably of Germanic origin, who are first mentioned in the region in the later third century. It may have been they who prevented a further, more intensive, Celtic penetration.

The nature of the Celtic presence in the northern Black Sea littoral is unclear. The place names and the Protogenes inscription show that they remained a cohesive entity, but the archaeological evidence could imply at least a degree of assimilation in the confused Scytho-Sarmatian culture of the region. The Celtic swords found in Scythian graves, like that at Verkhnjaja Tarasovka in the Lower Dnieper valley, and the Celtic fibulae and bracelets from other Scythian cemeteries may well represent the exchange of weapons and women between elites. The Greek town dwellers' familiarity with Celts is also suggested by a number of terracotta figures depicting Celtic weaponry.

Further to the east, east of the Sea of Azov and including the basins of the rivers Don and Kuban, a scatter of Celtic items has been found, most notably Etrusco-Celtic helmets of Montefortino type. Although these were probably made in the fourth and third centuries, most have been found in Sarmatian graves of the second and first centuries. Various explanations may be offered for the processes by which the helmets were transported, and they and the other items need not imply a significant Celtic presence. It may be relevant, however, that Greek geographers considered Meotide (the Sea of Azov) to be the frontier of the Celtic world. If this were so it would not be unreasonable to argue that the helmets and other prestige items such as bronze vessels found in the Koban were the result of gift exchange between Celtic communities and their Sarmatian neighbours on the eastern side of the sea.

Sufficient will have been said to show that there are grounds for accepting a Celtic presence in the north Pontic region, but the nature of the community, its size, and its longevity as a distinct ethnic entity remain obscure. Only one settlement, at Bovshev on the Dniester, and one grave, at Zalesye in the Pripyat estuary near Chernobyl, may reasonably be regarded as Celtic. The remaining thirty or forty items are all stray finds. In a minimalist view, the Celtic presence need have been no more significant or long-lasting than the kingdom of Tylis in Thrace.



8.6 A plaque of bronze inset with enamel from Kerch, Ukraine, showing the influence of motifs adapted from Celtic art. First century AD. Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

The Galatians

The Galatians of Asia Minor provide an interesting example of Celtic communities retaining their ethnic integrity after the initial settlement in the early third century BC. Yet they appear to have adopted the material culture of their new homeland with little or no reference to that of their roots.

The history of the Galatians has been outlined above (Chapter 6), and need not be repeated here. Suffice it to say that the historical view records the movement of some 20,000 people, only half of whom were fighting men, into Asia Minor in 278–277 BC under the leadership of Leonorios and Lutorios. They came, we are told, at the invitation of King Nicomedes of Bithynia to serve the king in his conflicts with his neighbours. After fifty years or so as mercenaries in the service of different factions and as raiders in their own right, they were eventually settled in Phrygia in the vicinity of Ancyra.

Livy, no doubt following Polybius, gives an account of the migrants at the time of their arrival. They were divided into three tribal groups, the Tolistobogii, the Trocmi, and the Tectosages, all speaking the same language, with each of them laying claim to a territory over which to rampage and raid. It was in this mobile phase of their occupation that they provided mercenary services for any Hellenistic potentate willing to employ them. After a major defeat in about 232 BC, the Celtic peoples were compelled to concentrate in Phrygia. The Tectosages were already in the Ancyra region and the other two tribes were settled nearby. An agreement with the Pergamene king, Attalus, recognized the Celts' right to the land they now occupied in return for an agreement to cease raiding the Pergamene kingdom and other spheres of Pergamene interest. In reality this left only the lands to the east as legitimate for exploitation and it was probably at this time that some territorial expansion took place east of the river Halys. The agreement with Attalus marks the point at which Galatia—the land of the Galatae—became a recognized territory, and we can henceforth speak of the inhabitants as Galatians.

The Galatians by this time must have become ethnically mixed. The elite lineages may well have been descended from the original migrant families of two generations past, but the indigenous population of Phrygia will now have been absorbed, if only in a subservient position, into the Galatian state.

The social structure of the Galatians seems to have remained little changed from its earlier form. According to Strabo, each of the three tribes was divided into four parts, which were called tetrarchies, and each had its own overall leader, a tetrarch, to whom a judge, a war leader, and two subordinate commanders were answerable. A council, representing the twelve tetrarchies and composed of 300 men, met at Drunemeton. Among its duties was to pass judgement on murder cases. The system has interesting similarities to the organization of the Celtic Gauls described by Caesar. There is the same separation of leadership between a civil and a military leader and the recognition of a distinct judicial class. A supreme council was also a feature of Gaulish society. Originally the Gaulish council met once a year under some form of Druidic authority in the territory of the Carnutes, but Augustus refounded it as the *Consilium Galliarum* and required it to meet at Lugdunum on 1 August at the Altar of Rome and Augustus. The name of the meeting place of the Galatians' council—Drunemeton—also implies a religious focus, since *nemeton* is a Celtic word for a sacred place and is suggestive of a controlling religious authority.

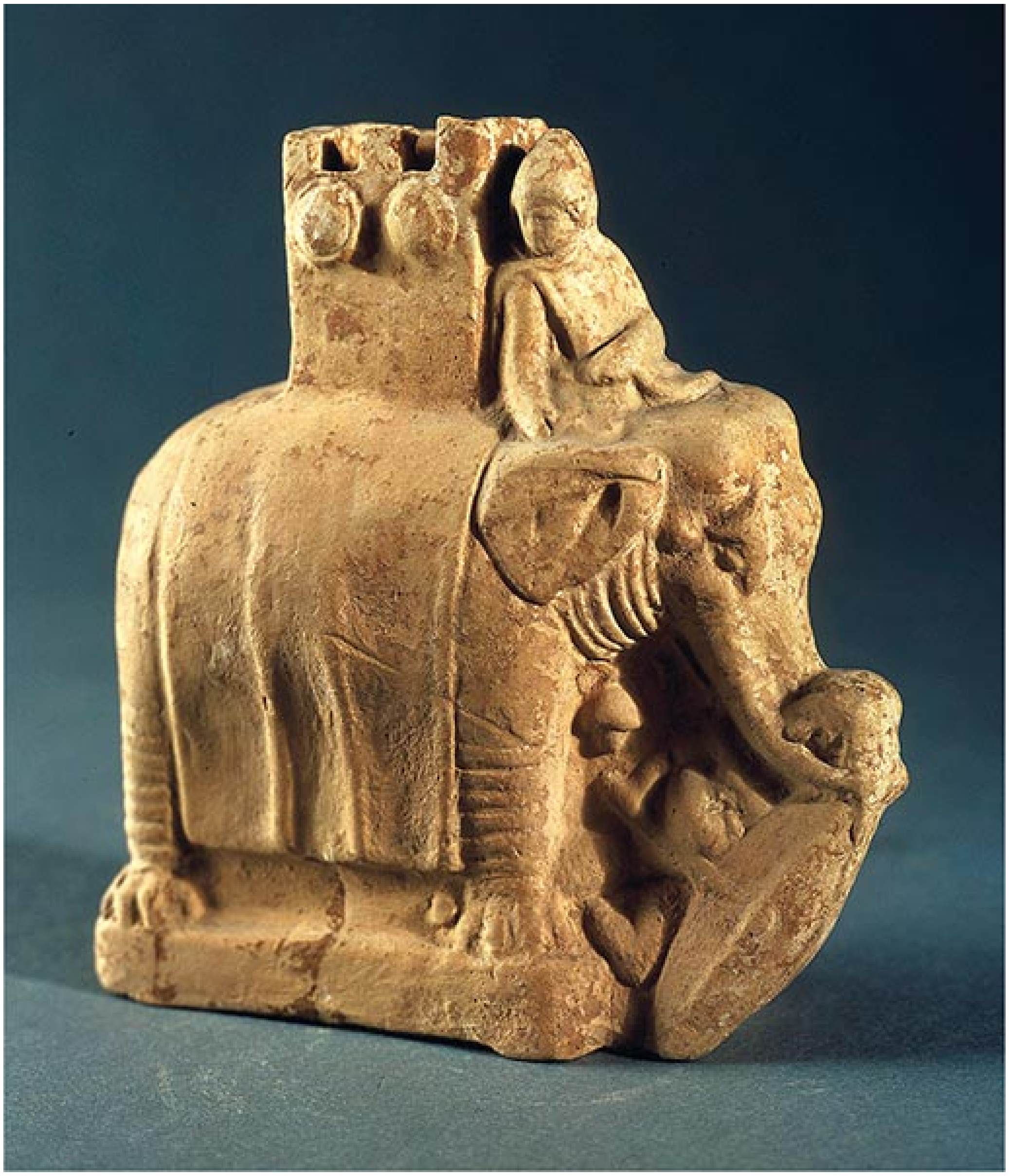
How long this essentially Celtic system of social organization lasted among the Galatians is unrecorded. Strabo, writing about the turn of the millennium, specifically mentions that in his time power had passed first to three rulers, then to two, and finally to one, in contrast to 'the organization of Galatia long ago'. This may have been, in part, a result of Roman encouragement or duress, but there are clear signs of change earlier. In 189 BC we learn that Ortagion, a chief of the Tolistobogii, wanted to unite the Galatians under his leadership, but his attempts met with little success and a few years later a number of social units are mentioned each with its own chief.

A century later the old system of tetrarchs still appears to have been in force. The glimpse is provided by a treacherous incident orchestrated by Mithridates IV. In 88 BC, in a bid to take control of Asia Minor, he effectively destroyed Galatian opposition by inviting the Galatian chiefs to meet him at Pergamum. Of the sixty who turned up all but one were massacred. Those who did not attend were picked off in individual attacks, only three tetrarchs managing to survive.

The massacre of the tetrarchs may well have been the deciding factor in bringing about far-reaching changes in the old social order. Not only did it greatly weaken the ruling elite, but it showed that divided leadership was ineffective in dealing with the problems of the rapidly changing world. The incident drove the Galatians to the Roman side, and it was in the interests of the Roman state to encourage a more unified leadership.

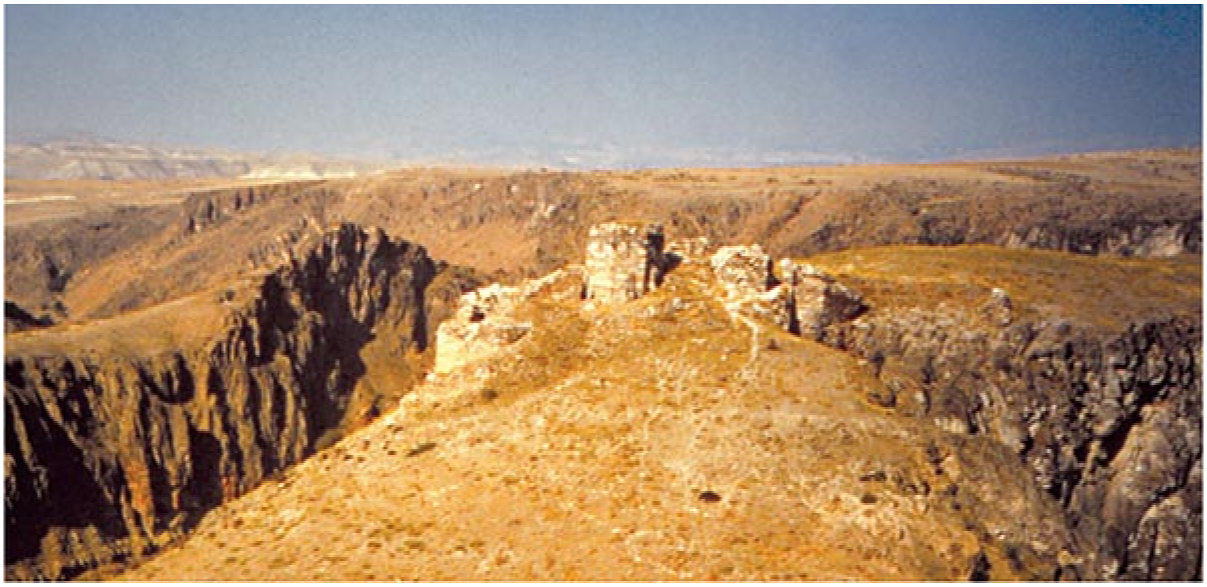
Very little is known of Galatian ritual or religion. The existence of Drunemeton is a hint that there were sacred locations, presided over, perhaps, by a Druidic priesthood, but there is no direct evidence of this. What is clear is that the indigenous cults were assimilated by the Celts. Such was the case of the worship of the Mother Goddess at Pessinus. In the late second century BC the high priest, known by the ritual name of Attis, was a Celt whose brother Aiorix bore a characteristically Celtic name. A later, Roman, inscription implies that half the college of priests at the temple were probably of Celtic birth. The sanctuary at Pessinus was, however, a thoroughly Hellenized place. Strabo refers to it as having been built by the Pergamene kings ‘in a manner befitting a holy place with a sanctuary and also with porticoes of white marble’. In spite of their acceptance of native cults and practices, the Galatians could revert to a more typically barbarous practice, as they did in 165 BC when, following the conclusion of a war with Eumenes, the most important of the prisoners were sacrificed to the gods, while the less favoured were dispatched by spearing. In this incident we may be witnessing a resurgence of the Celtic belief in the need to sacrifice the spoils of war to the deities.

The fighting practices of the Galatians were, as we have seen, vividly depicted by Pergamene artists in an array of victory monuments. Their fierceness and ferocity in battle were legendary. In 189 BC a Roman army, under the command of Cn. Manlius Vulso, moved against the Tolistobogii and Trocmi and won a decisive victory at Olympus near Pessinus. Livy gives a detailed account of the engagement, using the occasion to provide his reader with a series of familiar stereotypes about the Celt as a fighting man (*Hist.* 38. 19–30). Thus from the mouth of the commander, in his set-piece pre-battle oration, comes direct reference to incidents from the Celtic invasion of Italy in the fourth century. That Livy should emphasize the comparison in this way shows, at the very least, that he was acutely aware of the similarities of the two peoples, even though he may have overstressed or oversimplified them. Yet even allowing for these potential distortions, several interesting points emerge. The Galatians, it appears, were still using the rather archaic type of Celtic shield, ‘long, but not wide enough for the size of their bodies and … flat in surface’, and they still adopted the practice of fighting naked, a point lovingly described by Livy: ‘Their wounds were plain to see because they fight naked and their bodies are plump and white since they are never exposed except in battle.’ There is no reason to suppose that these observations were not specific to the event. Together they show that behaviour in battle had changed little, in spite of nearly a century of acclimatization in Asia Minor. Yet, Livy could report the Roman commander as saying: ‘The Gauls here are by now degenerate, a mixed race, truly described by their name Gallogrecians.’



8.7 War elephant trampling a Galatian soldier equipped with typical Celtic armour, possibly referring to the Elephant Battle of 275–274 BC. From Myrina, Lesbos. Mid-second century BC. British Museum, London.

In his brief review of Galatian territory, Strabo (*Geog.* 12. 5) makes no mention of towns. The Trocmi, he says, have ‘three walled garrisons’, Tavium, Mithridatium, and Danala; the Tectosages command the fortress of Ancyra; while the fortresses of the Tolistobogii are Blucium and Peïum, the former being the royal residence of king Deïotarus and the latter where he kept his treasure. Strabo’s use of ‘fortress’ is clearly intended to imply that these sites were not towns in the classical sense. He does, however, say that Tavium was ‘the emporium of the people in that part of the country’ and he uses the same word in describing Pessinus in the border region to the west of Galatia. By ‘emporium’ he was presumably seeking to stress the market functions of the two places. If we can accept Strabo’s distinctions, the implication is of an essentially non-urban society focused on a series of fortified enclosures and with an economy articulated at a few trading centres, at least one of them sited at a major shrine. The towns of the Phrygian indigenes were left to decay but by the time of the Roman annexation in 25 BC, Ancyra, Pessinus, and Tavium were sufficiently important to become the capitals of the three tribes.

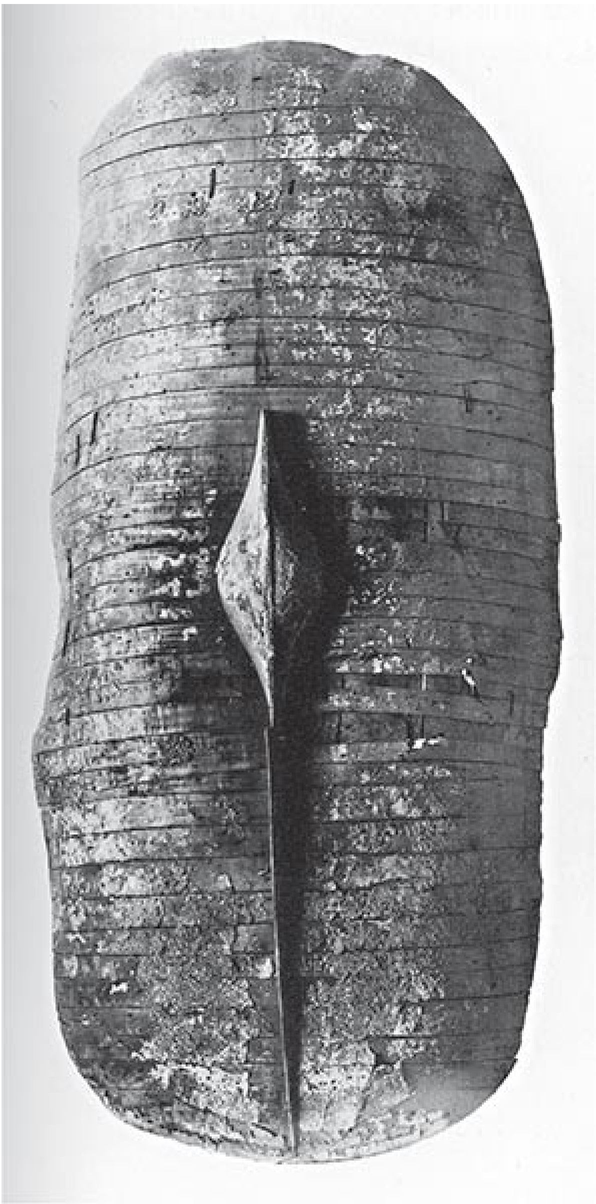


8.8 The treasury of the Galatian king Deïotarus was situated at Peïum in Anatolia on a ridge protected on two sides by a loop in the valley of the river Siberis. The masonry of the fortifications is typical high-quality late Hellenistic work.

Several Galatian fortresses have been located. Blucium has been tentatively identified, and the fortifications partially excavated, at Karalar, 35 kilometres north-west of Ankara. A nearby tomb with a funerary inscription showing it to have belonged to King Deïotarus (son of the king of the same name who was an ally of Rome) provided some assurance of the identification. Peïum, the second of the Tolistobogii strongholds mentioned by Strabo, is thought to lie in the meander of the river Girmir at Tabanlioğlu Kale. The deeply incised river provides the site with more than adequate protection on three sides, while the neck of the promontory is defended by a wall protected by multi-angular bastions built in fine Hellenistic masonry. The strength of the defences would be entirely appropriate to a fortress guarding the king's treasure. The quality of the architecture of Peïum (if correctly identified) is a reminder that the Galatian elite were well able to use Hellenistic building techniques, even if their fortified sites were typical Celtic hillforts in size and location.

The material culture of the Galatians has not been extensively studied, but sufficient is known to suggest that indigenous styles and technologies were adopted from the beginning. Distinctive items of La Tène metalwork are at present limited to a few bracelets and some twenty or so brooches from the whole of Asia Minor. While a few of these items were found, as would be expected, in Galatia and on the Aegean coast, the densest concentration lies in the south-east of the country in Cappadocia, a pattern which might suggest that Celtic raiding parties ranged over a wider territory than might be supposed from the classical sources.

The Galatians provide a fascinating example of a Celtic people who maintained a high degree of ethnic identity over several centuries, even though they must have represented a minority in their territory. Their persistence as a recognizably Celtic people is the result of elite dominance. As a powerful warlike group, thrown together by migration and periods of mercenary service, they were able to maintain their identity without recourse to the material symbols of their ethnicity.

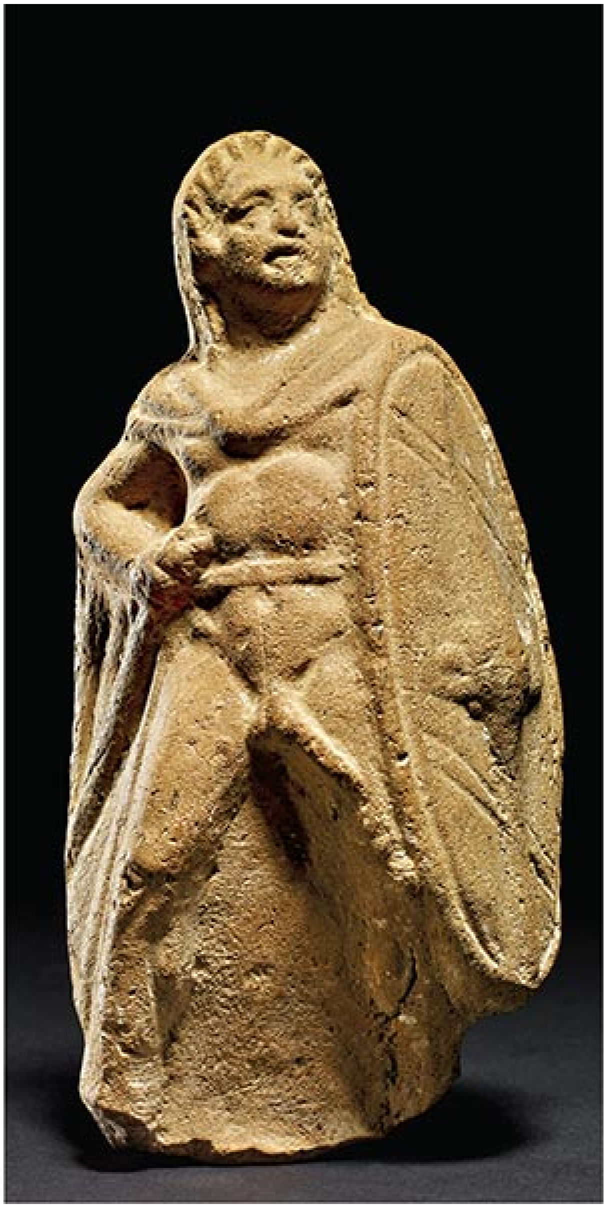


8.9 Wooden shield of Celtic type, well preserved in the desert atmosphere of the Fayum oasis, Egypt, where a group of Celtic mercenaries was given land in the third century BC. Service des AntiquitÃ©s, Cairo.

The Celts in Egypt

The Celts who burst onto the Hellenistic world in the 280s and 270s BC were largely integrated into the armies of the contending dynasts of Asia

Minor, but the renown of the Celt as a fighting man was already well known in the eastern Mediterranean. It is hardly surprising, therefore, to learn of Celts in Egypt as early as 274 BC serving in the army of Ptolemy II Philadelphos. They were most likely recruited from the horde that entered Asia Minor in 278, but that they may have arrived in Egypt sometime before is not impossible. They soon proved to be unreliable allies. Believing that Ptolemy was caught in an impossible position between his half-brother Magas in the west and Antiochos I in the east, they rebelled, spurred on by the prospects of the wealth to be gained by looting the cities and sanctuaries of Egypt. They had, however, misjudged the situation: Ptolemy reacted swiftly, driving some 4,000 of the mercenaries onto an island in the Sebennytic branch of the Nile, where, Pausanias tells us, ‘they perished by hunger and each other’s swords’.



8.10 Small terracotta figure of a Celtic warrior from Egypt. Third century BC. British Museum, London.

This was by no means the end of the Celtic presence in Egypt. It was normal in third-century Egypt for troops, no longer needed for active service, to be settled and given land to cultivate, usually in the Fayum. These *cleruchs* (‘sleepers’) were expected to keep up their military skills and to be immediately available when called upon. Among the cleruchs living in the Fayum was a detachment of Celts whose presence accounts for a wooden shield found preserved in the dry desert conditions. In 217

BC, when Egypt was threatened by the Seleucid king Antiochos III, Ptolemy IV called the sleepers to his defence. Among the 50,000 or so troops who were eventually amassed there were 6,000 ‘Gauls and Thracians’, of whom 2,000, of unspecified nationality, were newly recruited. Some of the cleruchs who took part were, according to Polybius, the sons of original settlers. In the event the Ptolemaic force won a resounding victory at Raphia in Gaza. It is tempting to think that the small terracotta of a resplendent Gaul found in Egypt celebrates Gaulish successes at this time.

Gauls still retained their identity throughout the second century BC and their presence is noted from time to time: they helped besiege the rebel town of Abydos in 186–185 BC and were part of the garrison resident at Hermopolis Magna towards the end of the century. Perhaps these detachments had families in the Fayum and returned there when not on military duty. That other communities existed elsewhere in Egypt is shown by funerary stelae found in the necropoli of Alexandria naming Gauls and depicting Celtic shields.

One wonders whether the old fighters living in the desiccating atmosphere of the Fayum oasis in the mid-third century told their incredulous children stories of the fertile Danube plain or the pine-clad slopes of Mount Parnassos remembered from the time when they had camped in its shadow waiting to pillage Delphi.

9

Warfare and Society

THE Graeco-Roman world had many opportunities to observe Celtic armies in action. Their viewpoint was usually, though not invariably, that of opponents, and those who recorded the confrontations did so to communicate more than just ethnographic observations and the facts of history. The writing of Greek and Roman history was formulaic. Pausanias would describe the Celtic attack on Greece in the third century BC using the same structure and balance as did Herodotus when writing of the Persian Wars centuries earlier. This equation of Celts with Persians—two enemies of the civilized world—is found in a fragment of poetry preserved on a papyrus of the third century and recurs in sculptured form on the great victory monument erected by the Pergamene king Attalus I in Athens in the second century BC. The message is the same: the enemy from without is fierce and brutal but can be overcome by the Greek peoples working together for the common good. Pausanias was writing in the second century AD and was therefore using a variety of earlier sources, among them Hieronymus of Cardia, who had served the Pergamene king Eumenes in the late fourth century BC, and Timaeus, who was in Athens during the Celtic raids, as well as other writers, including, perhaps, Menodotus of Perinthus and Agatharchides of Cnidus. The range of information available to him was varied, but the selection of material and its presentation were rigidly circumscribed by convention.

One of the key figures in the Roman historical tradition was Polybius, a citizen of the Greek town of Megalopolis who had been deported to Rome in 168 BC. Polybius' intention was to present the Celts as a formative influence on the development of Roman military power. In his view the initial invasion in the early fourth century and the continuous threat created by the Celtic settlement in the Po valley were instrumental in the honing of Rome's military competence. For him the frenetic Celts are to be presented as a contrast to the calm efficiency of the Roman army. While the Romans are steadfast, level-headed, well led, and achieve victory by dogged determination, the Celts are volatile and unpredictable and, though fierce in the initial onslaught, can easily lose heart and panic. It is, therefore, to their antithetical qualities, when compared with the Romans, that he gives most attention. The *History* of Polybius provided one of the prime sources used by Livy (59 BC–AD 17) for his own *History*, and, while it is evident that Livy had other sources of information on the Celts, the influence of Polybius' thesis is clear. Once more the Celts are presented as impulsive barbarians with an inability to plan rationally.

The narrative history of Polybius was continued by Poseidonius for the period 145–82 BC. The importance of Poseidonius (135–51 BC) is that he travelled widely in the Alps, Gaul, Spain, and possibly also Britain, observing for himself different Celtic societies in different states of development. His description of the Celts has survived only in the works of other writers, notably Strabo, Diodorus Siculus, Athenaeus, and Caesar, but when these are taken together it is clear that Poseidonius was a keen observer with the eye of an anthropologist and was well aware of the changes that were taking place. From his viewpoint as a Stoic he may be critical of many of the more irrational and exuberant aspects of Celtic society and tend to over-emphasize them, but what he offers has the ring of truthful reporting. His approach is to present the Celt as a Noble Savage—a natural man untarnished by civilization—but in pointing up the contrast to the civilized world he was prone to overstatement.

Julius Caesar probably used Poseidonius as a source, but he also had the unique opportunity of observing a variety of Celtic tribes from close at hand during his eight years of campaigning. His war *Commentaries* are, by their very nature, biased sources. Caesar is at pains to present the Celts in a way that would have been familiar to his audience, playing on old prejudices. He emphasized the fierceness and unreliability of the enemy, thereby enhancing his own achievements and providing a justification for his actions amounting in some cases to genocide. While his descriptions of Celtic society in Gaul and his picture of Britain and the Britons may be selective interpolations culled from other sources, there is much in his general accounts of military and political matters that is highly informative about the Celtic communities he was confronting.

Of the later sources, Tacitus offers new insights, particularly about the Britons. Once more there is a reliance on stock stereotypes and the bias inherent in using the concept of the Noble Savage to point up the iniquities of the times, but behind the selection and the rhetoric there are many useful insights into native customs and social and political organization.

Clearly all the historical sources available to us are biased in one way or another—such is the nature of historical sources—but it should not prevent us from using them in an attempt to characterize Celtic society and warfare. The greatest difficulties concern chronological and regional variation. To imply that any generalized description has universal application is evident nonsense. Most of our sources concern Celtic groups in the fourth to second centuries living in, and raiding from, those parts of Europe that were in proximity to the Mediterranean world. Within these parameters we may legitimately attempt to reconstruct a generalized picture of classic Celtic culture. Of the more remote Celtic-speaking regions, all that can be said is that some of them may have shared aspects of the classical model sometime in their history. There are, however, real difficulties in extending the model. Thus, while the troops led by Calgacus against Agricola in northern Scotland in AD 84 appear to have behaved in many ways like Celtic armies in Italy in the fourth and third centuries BC, it is not easy to decide whether these apparent similarities are a manifestation of archaic Celtic behaviour in remote and backward areas or the use by Tacitus of familiar Celtic stereotypes. A further possibility, that primitive warfare exhibited many similarities irrespective of time, place, and ethnicity, has also to be borne in mind.

The Warrior and his Equipment

The classic Celtic image is provided in Strabo’s oft-quoted description:

> The whole race … is madly fond of war, high-spirited and quick to battle, but otherwise straightforward and not of evil character. And so when they are stirred up they assemble in their bands for battle, quite openly and without forethought, so that they are easily handled by those who desire to outwit them.

When they are aroused, he says,

> they are ready to face danger even if they have nothing on their side but their own strength and courage … their strength depends on their mighty bodies, and on their numbers … to the frankness and high-spiritedness of their temperament must be added the traits of childish boastfulness and love of decoration. They wear ornaments of gold torcs on their necks, and bracelets on their arms and wrists, while people of high rank wear dyed garments besprinkled with gold. It is this vanity which makes them unbearable in victory and so completely downcast in defeat.
>
> (*Geog*. 4. 4. 2)

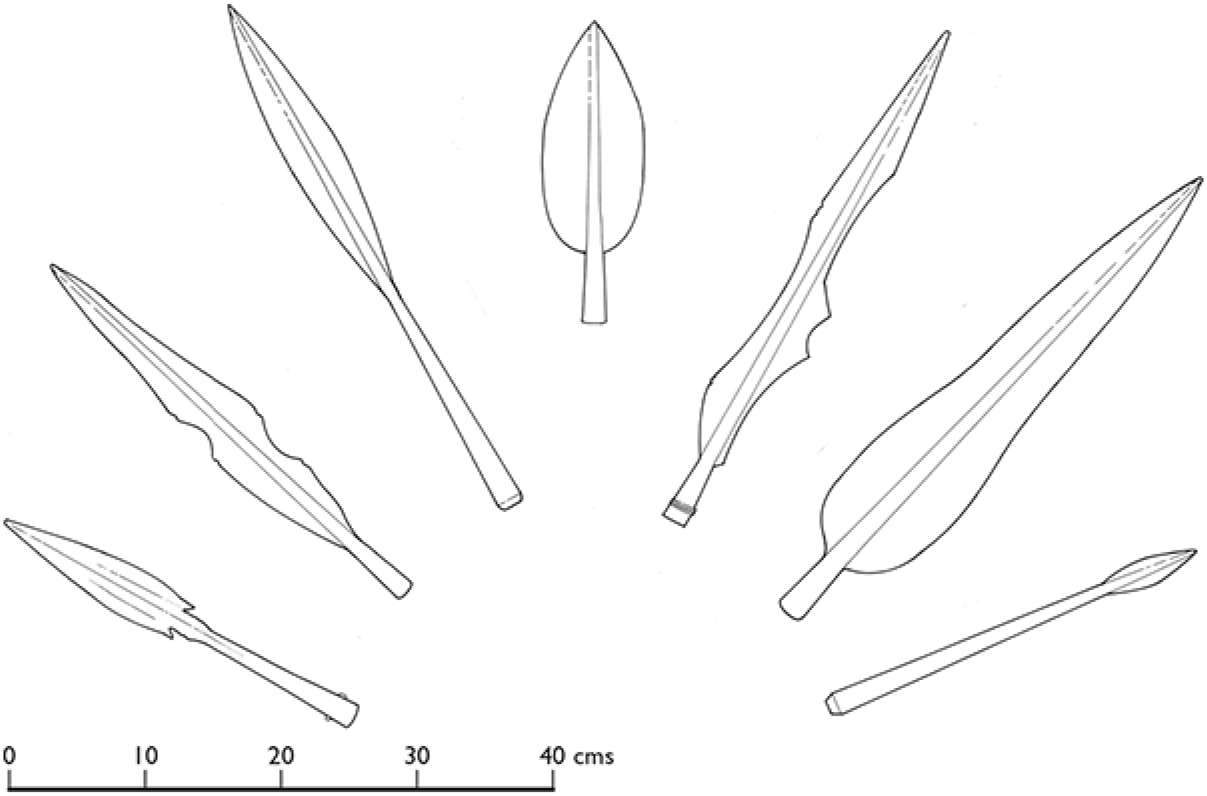
9.1 Detail of a brooch, possibly of Iberian origin, showing a naked Celtic warrior, complete with a typical set of armour, attacking a lion. Third century BC. British Museum, London.

Here then are displayed all the characteristics of the Greek or Roman vision of a Celtic warrior: he is ferocious, impetuous, boastful, flamboyant, and mercurial—not a foe to be lightly tangled with.

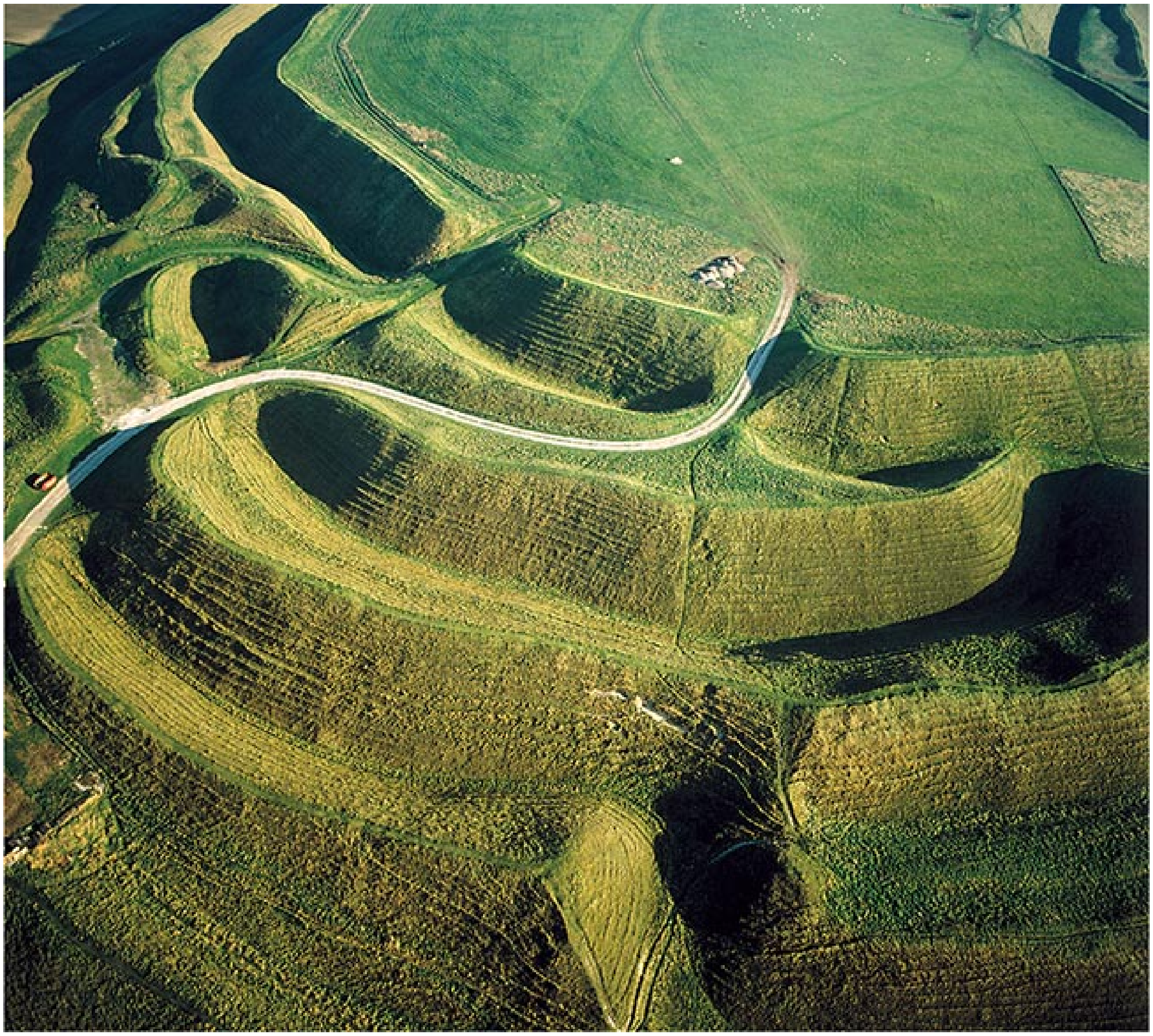
The weapons carried by the warrior were a sword, usually fastened on the right side, and a spear. Some used bows and arrows, slings, or throwing clubs. The normal means of protection was the shield, but sometimes helmets were worn and less often tunics of ring mail. All these pieces of equipment mentioned in the texts are reflected in the archaeological record and in the surviving iconography, though it is sometimes possible to detect regional variations. Among the Parisii of Yorkshire, for example, the sword was sometimes worn across the back and had therefore to be drawn over the shoulder from behind the head.

Iron swords in sheaths of iron, bronze, wood, or leather were the symbol of the warrior and as such were often personalized by elaborate decoration applied to the sheath or by stamps beaten into the blade. Polybius is scathing of the quality of the swords used at Telamon in the third century. They were good for cutting but not thrusting and became easily bent during battle, requiring the warriors to pause and bend them back into shape with the foot, he reports. While there was, indeed, a variation in quality, and some made of softer iron may have been ineffective, the description may owe something to the fact that swords were often deliberately bent before being ritually deposited and it may have been the results of ritual activity rather than battle that Polybius was noting.

Throwing and thrusting spears were equally important, and a considerable variety of spearheads have been found, the different weights and shapes suiting them to different purposes. The large collection recovered from the ritual site of La Tène presents a variety of lethal designs with serrated, flame-shaped, and hollow-ground blades designed for easy penetration. One version, with a notched blade, conforms to the type described by Diodorus Siculus with ‘breaks throughout the entire length so that the blow not only cuts but also tears the flesh, and the recovery of the spear rips open the wound’ (*Hist.* 5. 30).

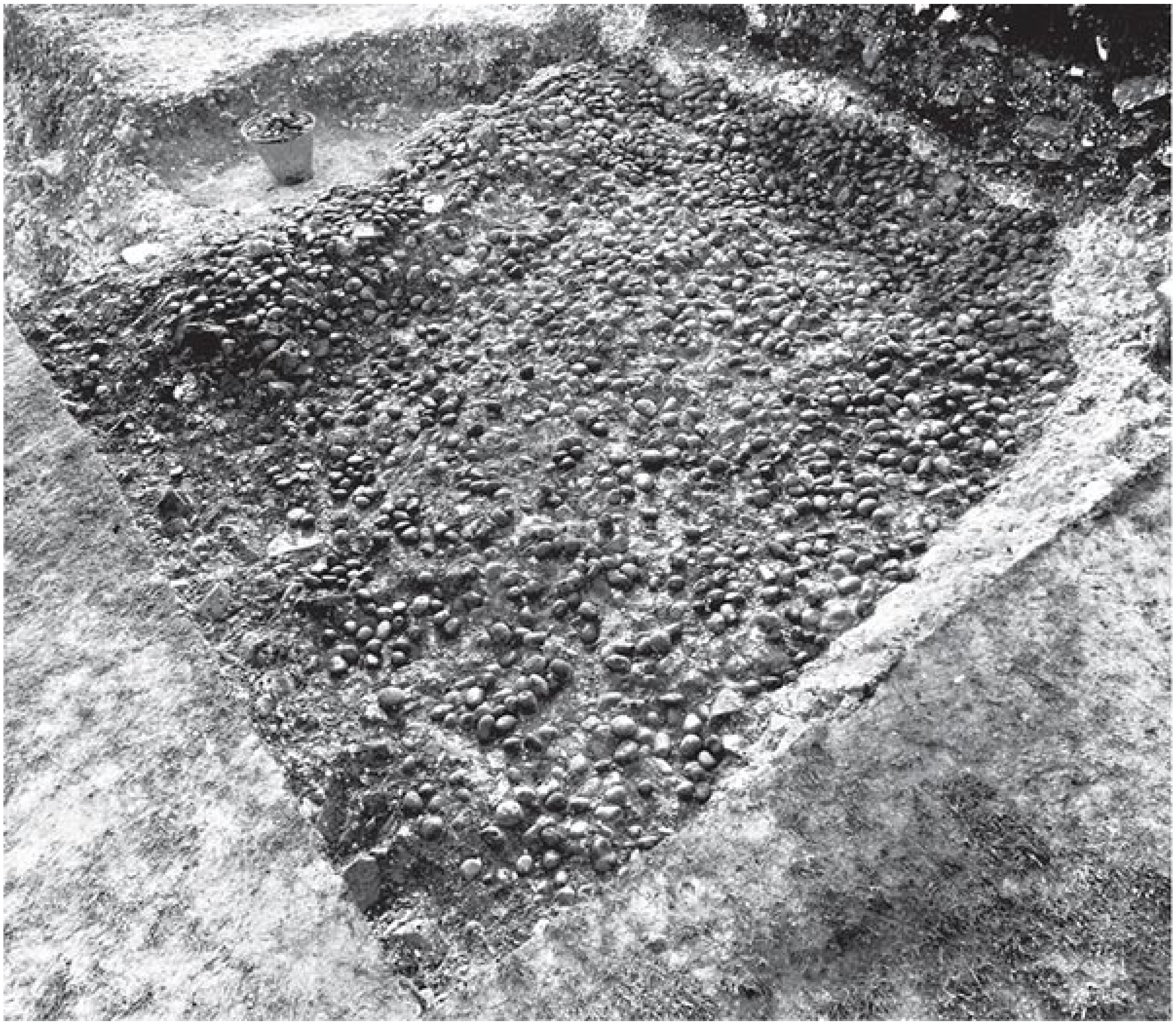


9.2 Spearheads recovered from the site of La Tène in Switzerland. The variety of forms suggests a degree of specialization in the use of the spear in the hunt and in warfare.



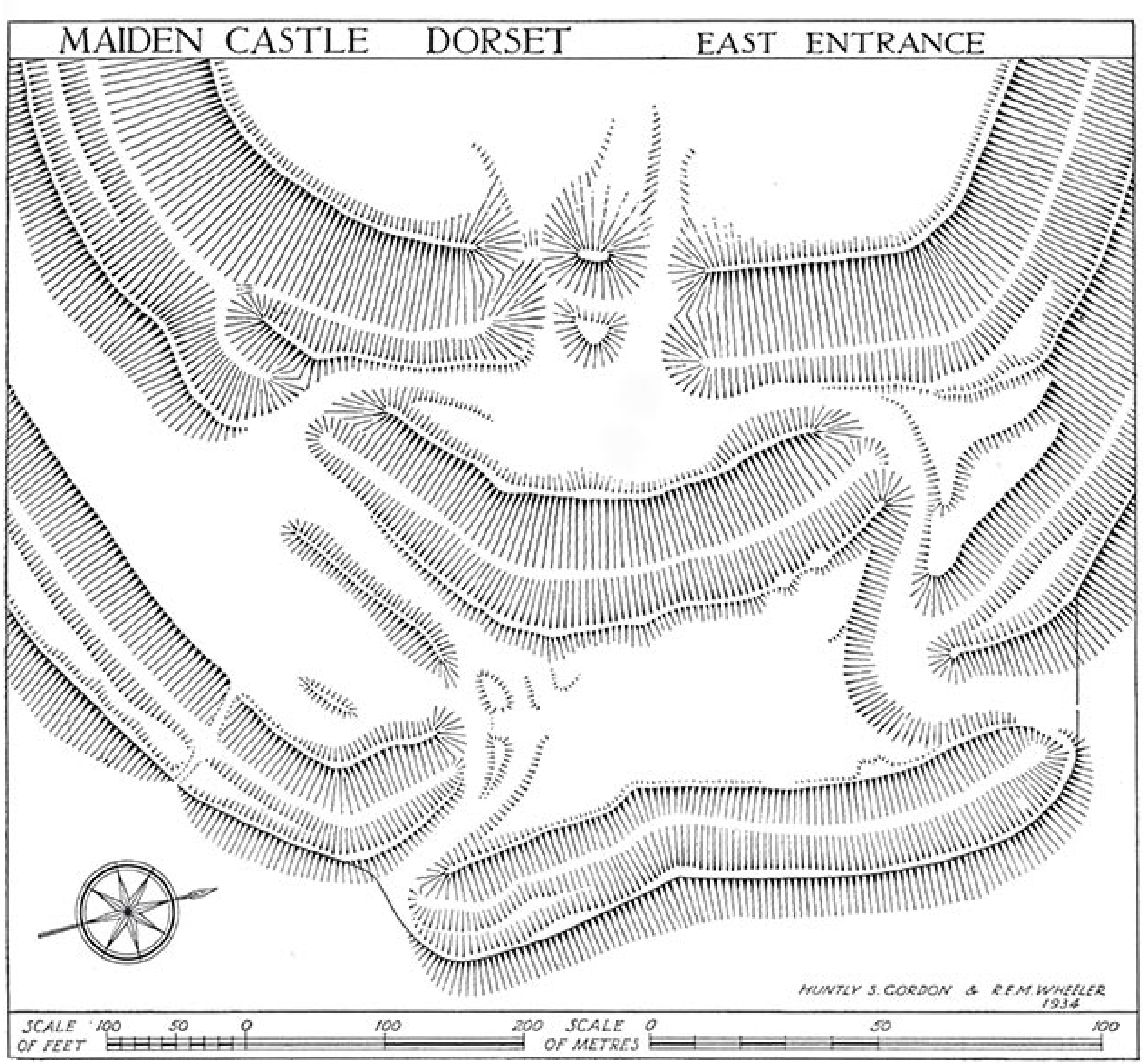
9.3 Aerial view of the east gate of Maiden Castle, Dorset, England. The complex earthworks extending down the slope in front of the gate would have forced any attackers to weave backwards and forwards, exposing themselves to constant attack from strategically placed sling platforms. The fort was probably attacked and taken by the Second Legion in AD 43.

Bows and arrows are not often mentioned and are rare in the archaeological record, but a scatter of bronze arrowheads of trilobate kind, a type common among the Scythians, may have been brought back to western Europe by mercenaries and migrants who had learnt to use them in the east. That the bow was not mentioned in any of the recorded conflicts implies, however, that archery was little favoured in the Celtic world.

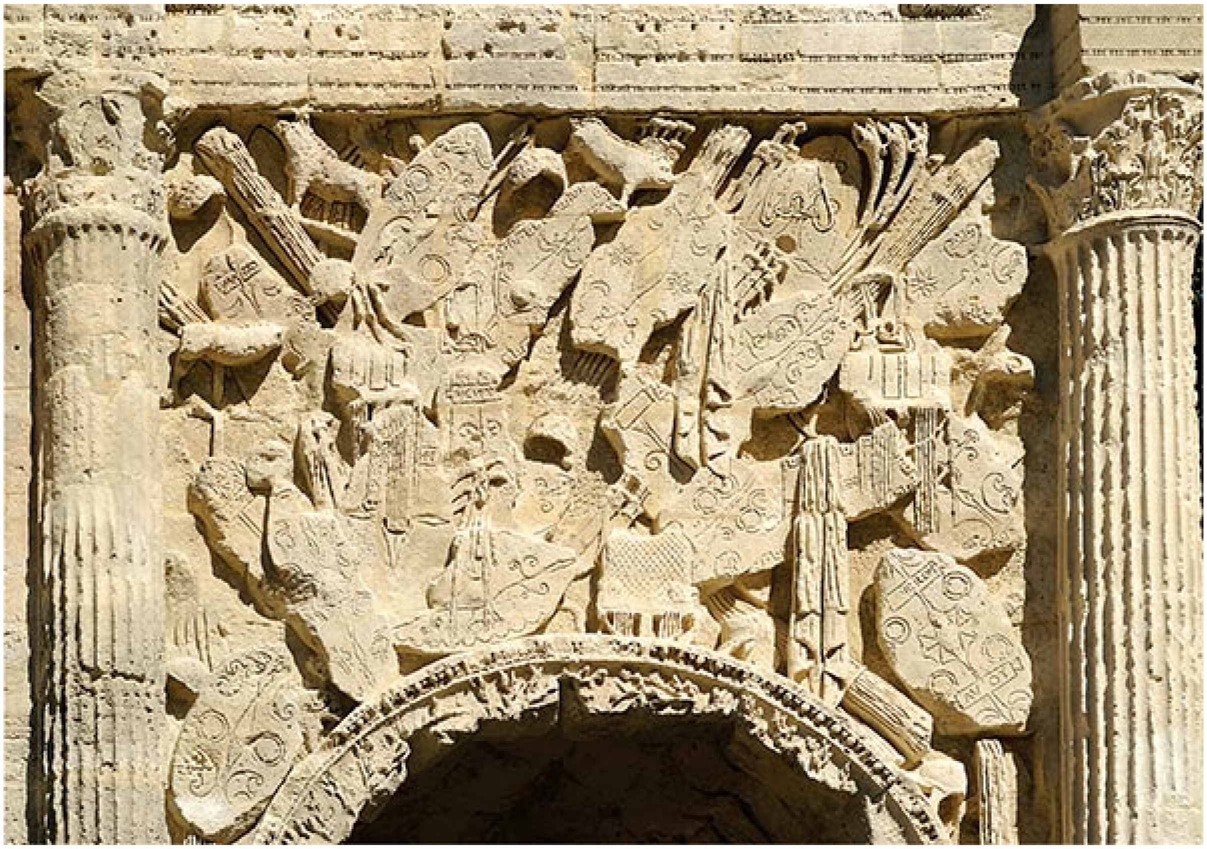


9.4 The excavation of Maiden Castle, Dorset, England, exposed a pit containing about 20,000 carefully chosen pebbles to serve as sling stones for the defence of the fort in the first century AD. The ammunition dump lay just inside the strongly fortified east gate.

The sling is only mentioned in passing and does not feature in any set-piece battle. In Britain, however, there is ample archaeological evidence for its use as a defensive weapon at hillforts. Huge stockpiles of carefully selected sling pebbles found near the gates of Maiden Castle and Danebury were kept in readiness, and the gates and earthworks seem to have been designed to facilitate the use of the sling to drive away attackers. That slings were also used in attacks upon hillforts is specifically mentioned by Caesar, who, in describing Gaulish warfare, says that the missile volley was employed to drive defenders from the ramparts. In such contexts, slings would have been particularly effective, but were much less useful in open warfare.

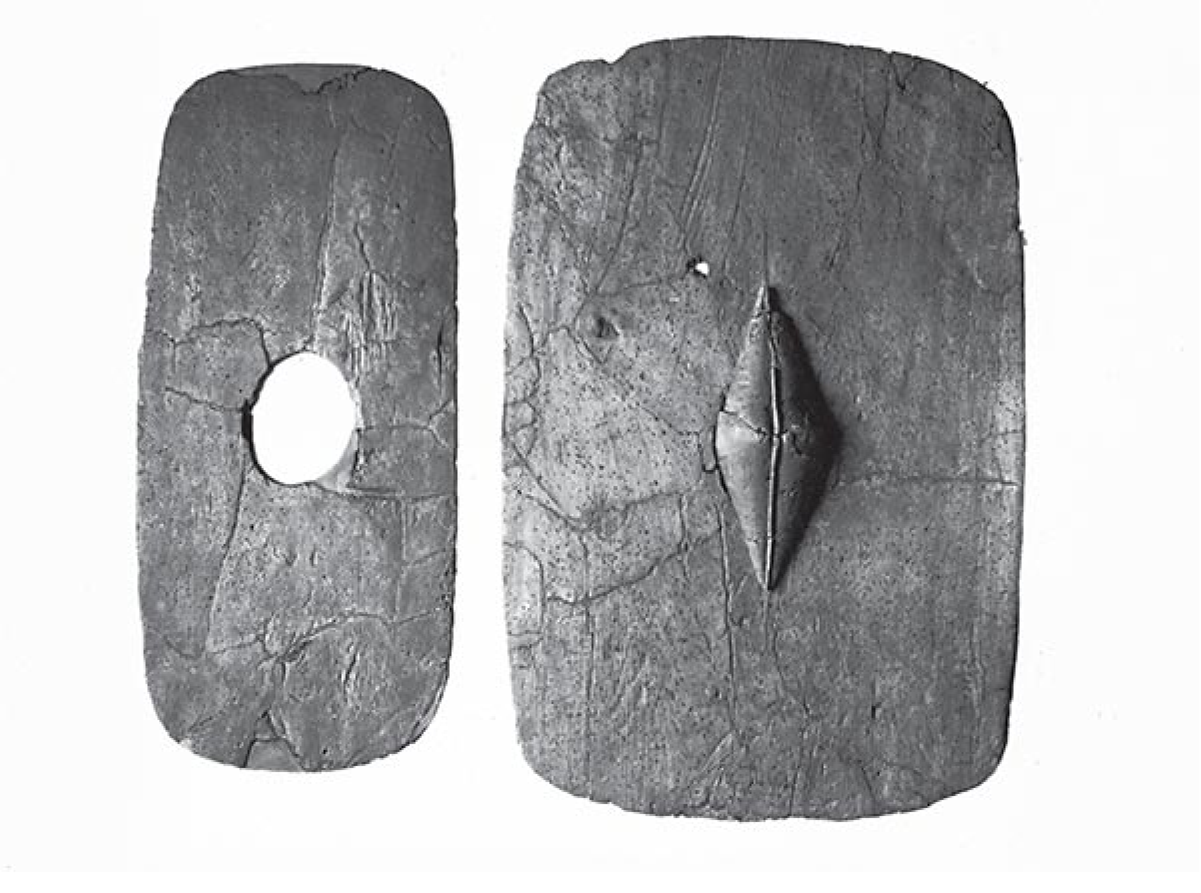

MAIDEN CASTLE DORSET
EAST ENTRANCE
HUNTLY S. GORDON & R.E.M. WHEELER
1934
SCALE OF FEET
100
50
0
100
200
SCALE OF METRES
0
50
100

9.5 The east entrance of Maiden Castle, showing the arrangement of the sling platforms.



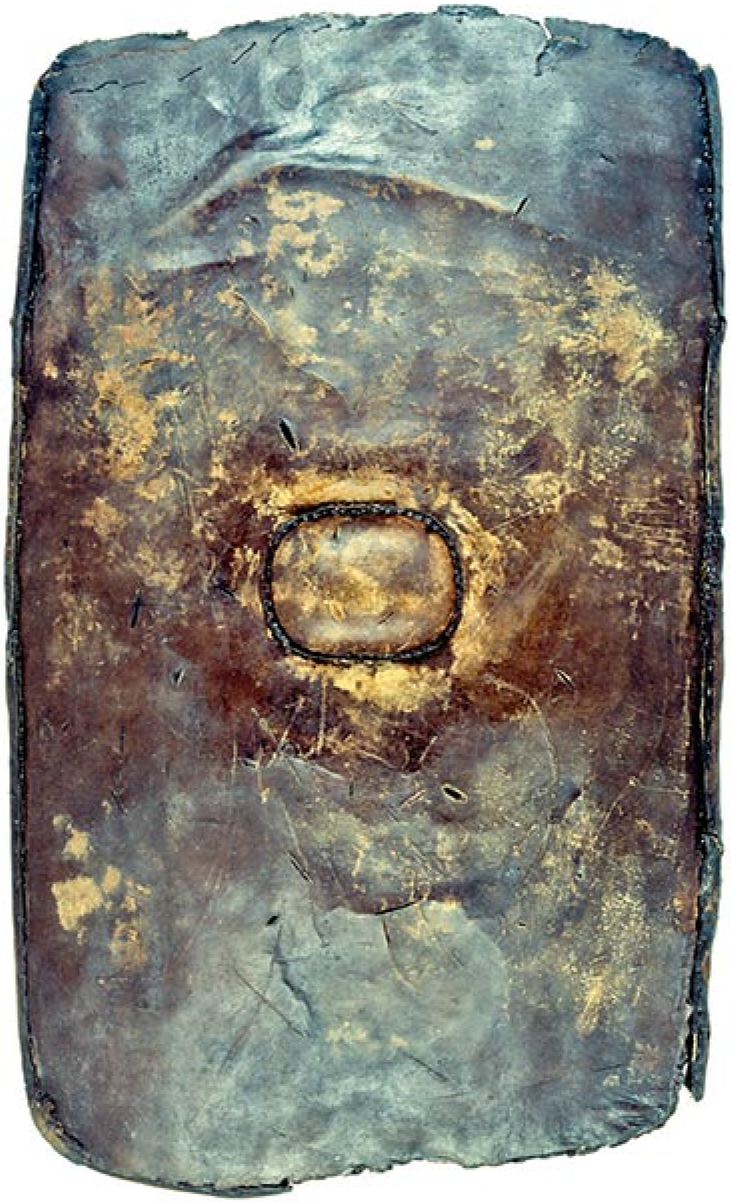
9.6 The Roman monumental arch at Orange, in southern France, is decorated with reliefs showing piles of Celtic-style armour taken in battle and displayed as trophies. The arch is first century AD in date. To which campaigns it refers is uncertain.

The principal form of personal protection used by the warrior in battle was the shield, described by Diodorus as man-sized and decorated in individual fashion, some with projecting bronze animals of fine workmanship. An idea of the variety of decoration favoured is provided by the piles of armour depicted on the Roman triumphal arch at Orange. The simplest form of shield was made of leather or wood or a combination of the two. The ritual deposit found in a bog at Hjortspring on the Danish island of Als contained a number of wooden shields made out of planks with circular holes to take handgrips, the knuckles protected by wooden umbos. Shields of this kind would have been effective but heavy. A far more efficient model is that represented by the shield found in a bog at Clonoura, Co. Tipperary, in Ireland. It was composed of a thin sheet of wood covered back and front with leather providing a light and highly resilient form of protection: the umbo was also of leather. A shield of similar structure can be reconstructed from the archaeological evidence surviving in a burial at St Peter Port, Guernsey, but in this case the protective umbo was of iron, in the corrosion products of which traces of the wood and leather body of the shield were preserved. In all probability this type was in widespread use, though usually only the metal fittings survive. More elaborate examples were covered in sheet bronze with bronze umbos, often highly decorated. In battle the bronze facings would easily have been slashed. Examples from the Thames at Chertsey and Battersea and from the river Witham were probably votive offerings and may indeed have been made for display and subsequent deposition. Such pieces were more appropriate to the parade than to actual warfare.

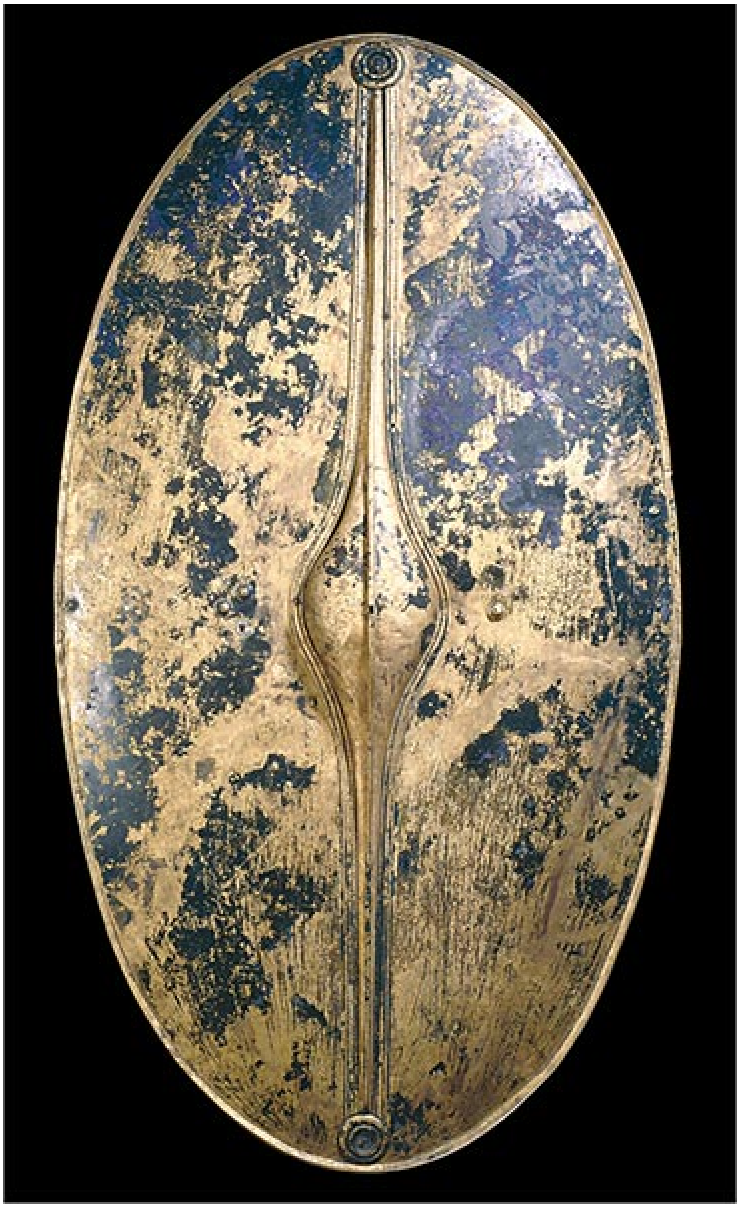


9.7 (*Above*) Simple wooden shields from a votive deposit buried in a ship at Hjortspring on the island of Als, Denmark. The shields are made from planks of wood with holes, covered by umbos, to accommodate the handgrip. Fourth century BC. Nationalmuseet, Copenhagen.

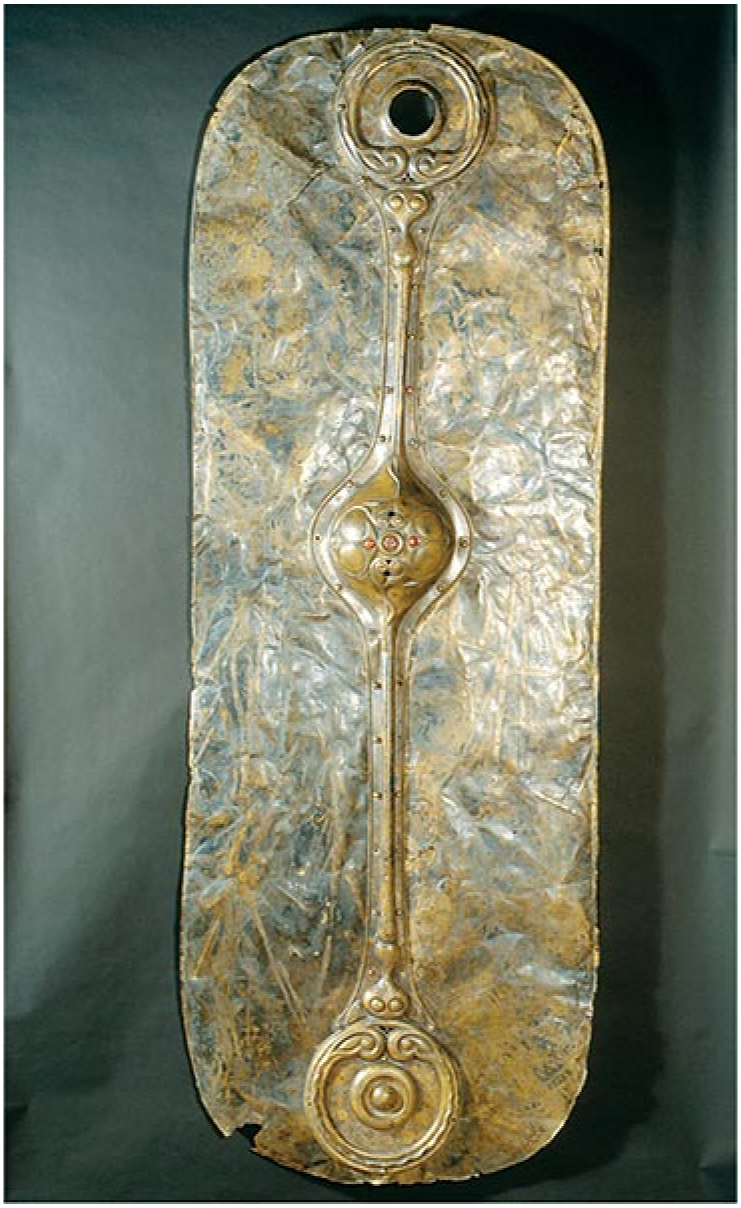
Bronze helmets were a feature of warrior equipment. Diodorus mentions that some possessed ‘long projecting figures, lending the appearance of enormous stature to the wearer. In some cases horns form one piece with the helmet, while in other cases it is relief figures or the foreparts of birds or quadrupeds' (*Hist.* 5. 30). This is amply borne out in the archaeological record, with finds of helmets with sockets for projecting elements and, in the case of one helmet from Ciumesşti in Romania, with an attached bird complete with flapping wings. The horned helmet recovered from the Thames at Waterloo Bridge conforms to the general description, while small castings of bronze boars found in many parts of Europe are most likely to have been helmet attachments. Boar-crested helmets as well as others with birds and horns are shown worn by the warriors depicted on the Gundestrup cauldron.



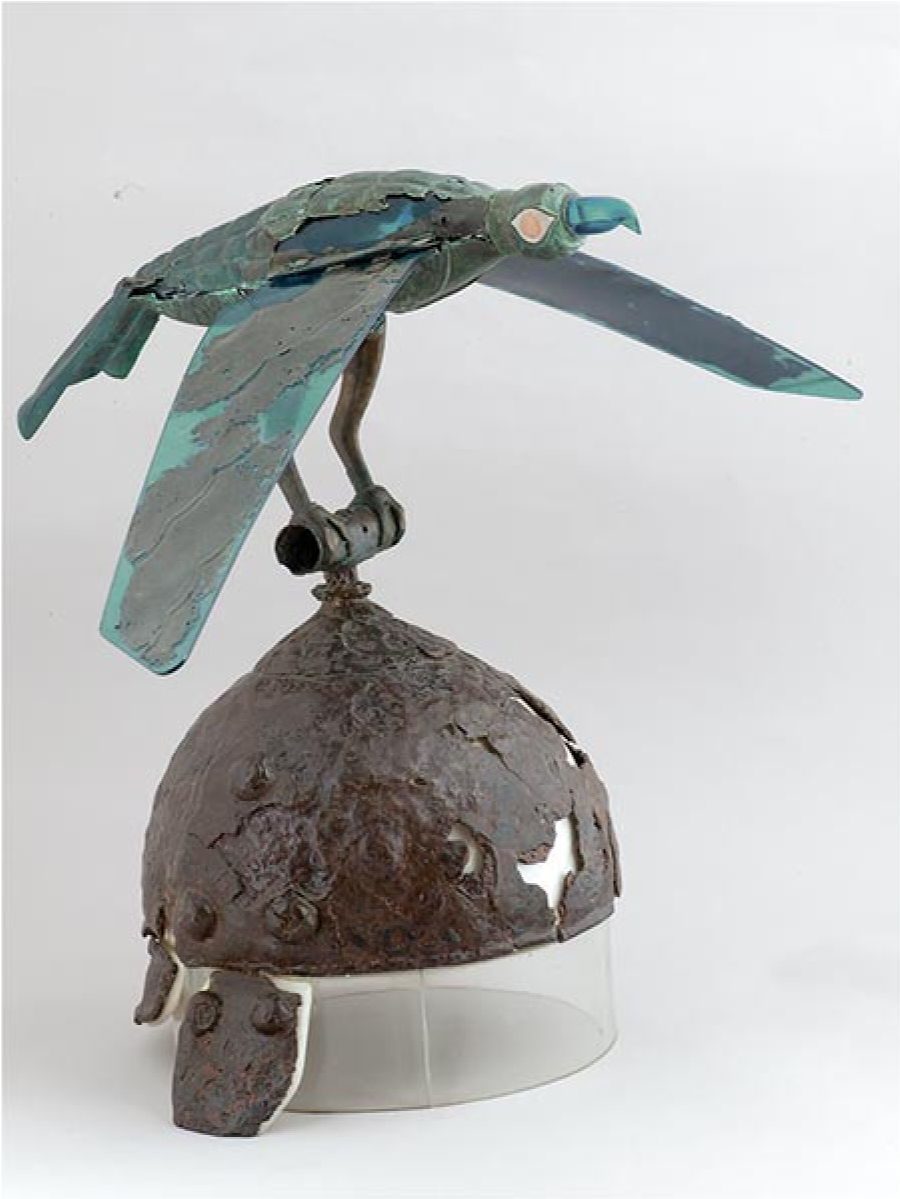
9.8 (*Right*) Shield discovered in a bog at Clonoura, Co. Tipperary, Ireland. The shield is made of thin sheets of wood covered with leather and bound around the edge with leather strips. The central umbo protecting the handgrip is also of leather. The construction means that the shield, while very resilient, is light to hold. The surface exhibits battle scars. National Museum of Ireland, Dublin.



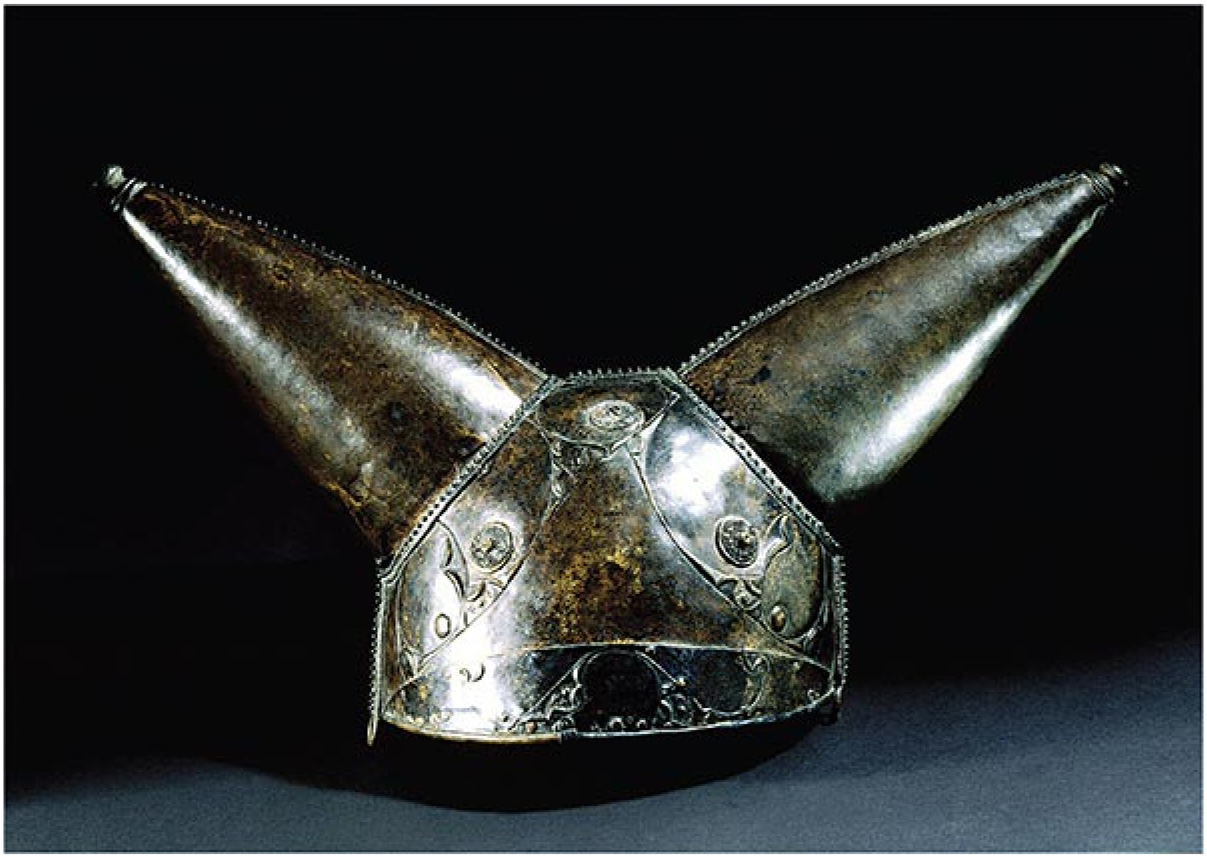
9.9 (*Left*) Thegeneral description, while Chertsey shield, recovered from the river Thames at Chertsey, Surrey, England. Elaborate metal-faced shields of this kind may have been made specifically for display or ritual deposition. Third or second century BC. British Museum, London.



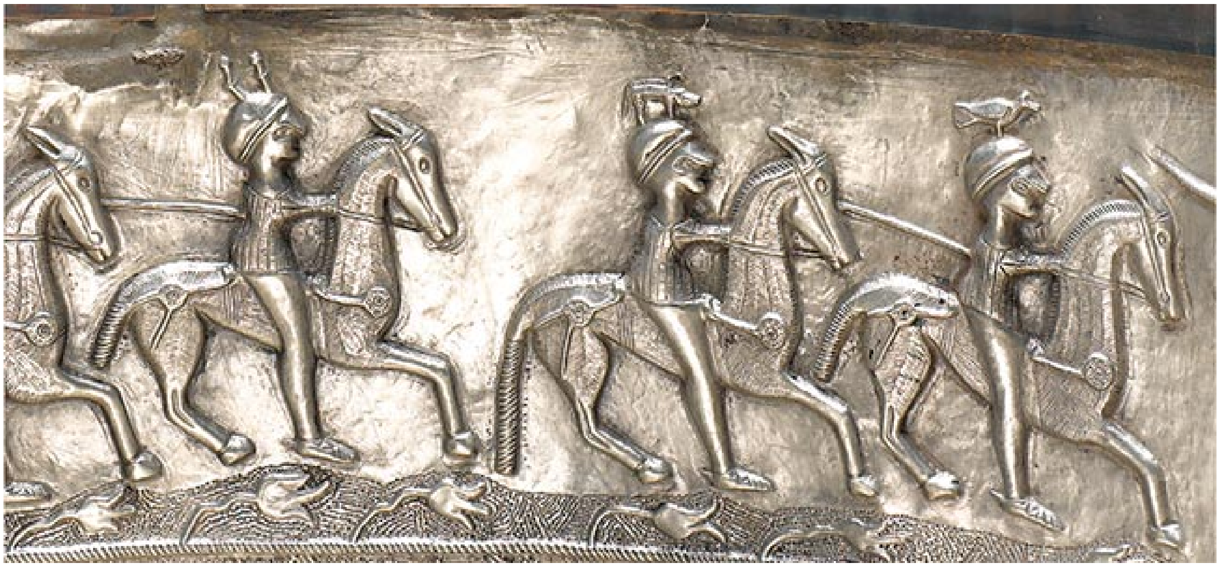
9.10 (*Right*) Bronze shield found in the river Witham, near Washingborough, Lincolnshire, England. The body of the shield bears the indistinct outline of a boar. Third or second century BC. British Museum, London.



9.11 (*Right*) Helmet found in a warrior’s grave at CiumesÂ¸ti, Romania. It bears a fearsome bird with movable wings, which would flap when the wearer ran, and staring eyes of red glass. Early third century BC. Muzeul NatÂ¸ional de Istorie a RomÃ¢niei, Bucharest.



9.12 (*Below*) The horned helmet from the Thames near Waterloo Bridge, dating to the first century BC or early first century AD, would also have made its wearer look dominating. British Museum, London.



9.13 Detail from the cauldron found at Gundestrup, Denmark, showing mounted warriors wearing helmets, one with a bird crest, the other with a boar. First century BC? Nationalmuseet, Copenhagen.

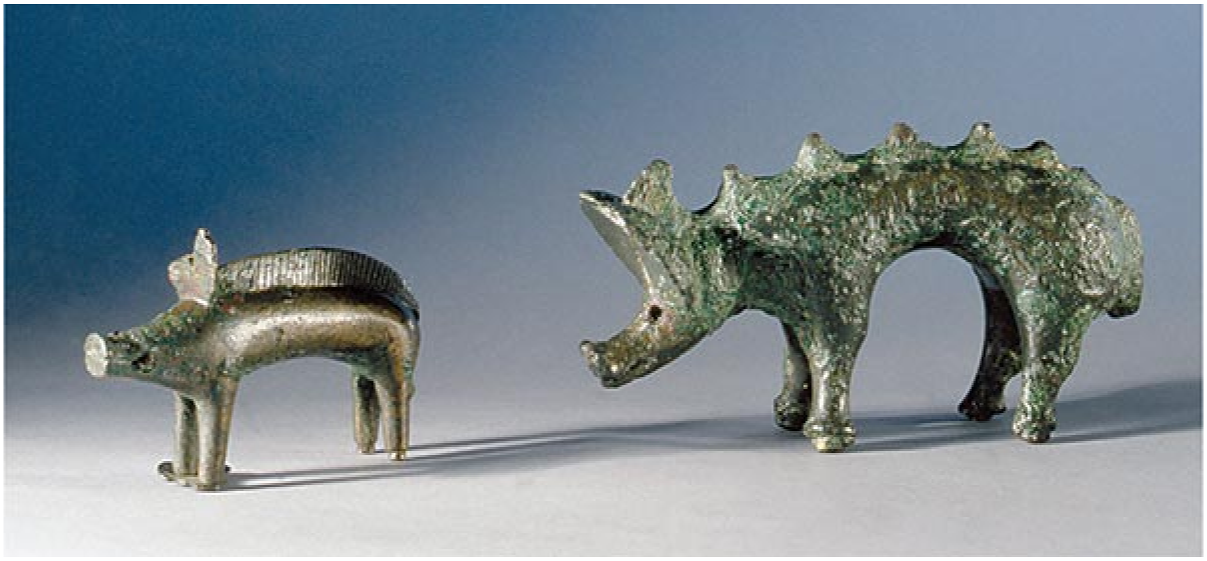
Diodorus also mentions that some warriors wore iron breastplates of chain mail. Seated stone figures from the sanctuary of Roquepertuse and a stone statue of a Gaul from Vachères (Basses-Alpes) dating to the late first century BC are shown wearing chain mail, and actual examples have been found in a few burials, including that of the warrior provided with the bird-crested helmet who was buried at Ciumesşti.

One of the features of Celtic warfare which impressed itself upon the classical mind was the fact that some warriors fought naked except for the sword belt and a gold neck torc. In his description of the battle of Telamon in 225 BC Polybius distinguishes a particular detachment—the Gaesatae—who fought in this way. ‘Very terrifying, too, were the appearance and gestures of the naked warriors in front, all in the prime of life and finely built men, and all in the leading companies richly adorned with gold torcs and armlets’ (*Hist.* 29. 5–9). Polybius believed that they discarded their clothes because they thought that they would be a hindrance in battle, but this is likely to be a rationalization. In all probability nakedness had a ritual significance. The Gaesatae (‘spear-men’) were distinguishable as a distinct group and at Telamon appear to have been a lately arrived mercenary force. Their ritual nakedness may have been a demonstration of their oneness as a fighting body. Nakedness in battle is again referred to in

Galatia in 189 BC, when the Tolistobogii and Trocmi took off their clothes before battle with the Romans, exposing their podgy white bodies, enhancing the vividness of their wounds as they were cut to pieces by the Roman force.

The vision of the naked Celt is a recurring theme in Graeco-Roman art, as is witnessed by the Pergamene statues, but it also appears much earlier on the Bologna funerary stela of the fifth century BC which shows a naked Celtic foot soldier in conflict with a mounted Etruscan. In sum, the evidence leaves little doubt that to fight naked was a comparatively common occurrence in the Celtic world.

Another recurring theme in the literature and in art is the wearing of the torc in battle. The torc had a deep religious significance. Deities are usually shown wearing torcs and the seated god on the Gundestrup cauldron, in addition to wearing one torc, holds another in his hand. Torcs are also found in ritual depositions, as is witnessed, in particular, at Snettisham in Norfolk. The torc will have given the wearer the sense of being protected by the gods—it was a symbol of his life and being. When, in 361 BC, the Roman Manlius confronted a Celtic chieftain in single combat, the Celt fought naked but for his shield, two swords, and his torc and armlets. Manlius killed him and took his torc, acquiring, in doing so, the name *Torquatus*. Nearly 200 years later, in 191, when the Roman army defeated the Celts at Bologna, the spoils included 1,500 gold torcs. Even as late as AD 60, when the British queen Boudica led her troops into battle, she is described as carrying a spear and wearing a cloak and a gold torc.

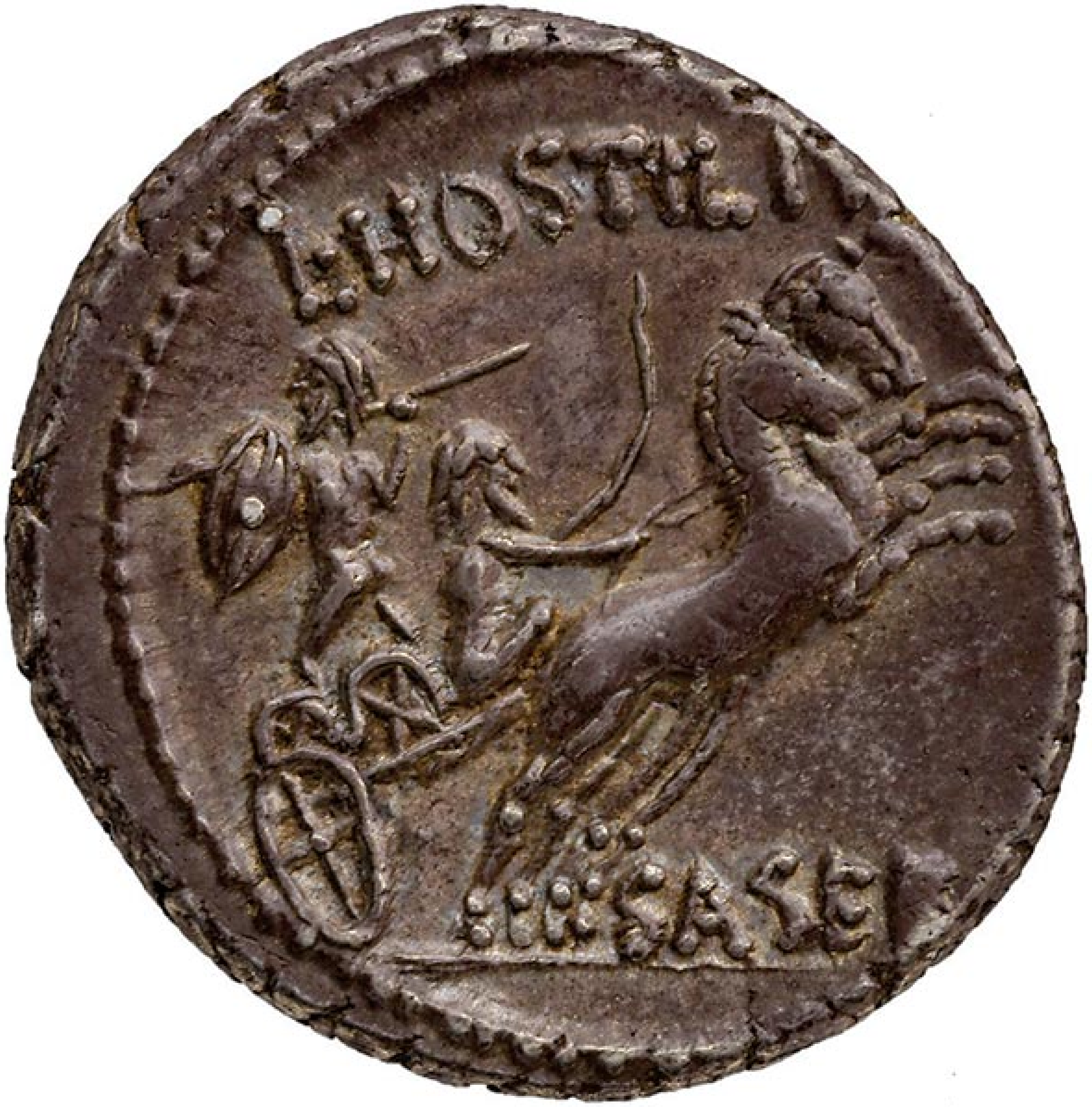


9.14 Celtic helmets sometimes had attachments on the crest to signify lineage or status or, more likely, as religious symbols to protect the wearer. These two small boars may well have been used in such a way. They were found at Hounslow in Middlesex, England, and may possibly have been part of a votive offering. The boar was a frequently used image, suggesting that it was endowed with particular potency. British Museum, London.

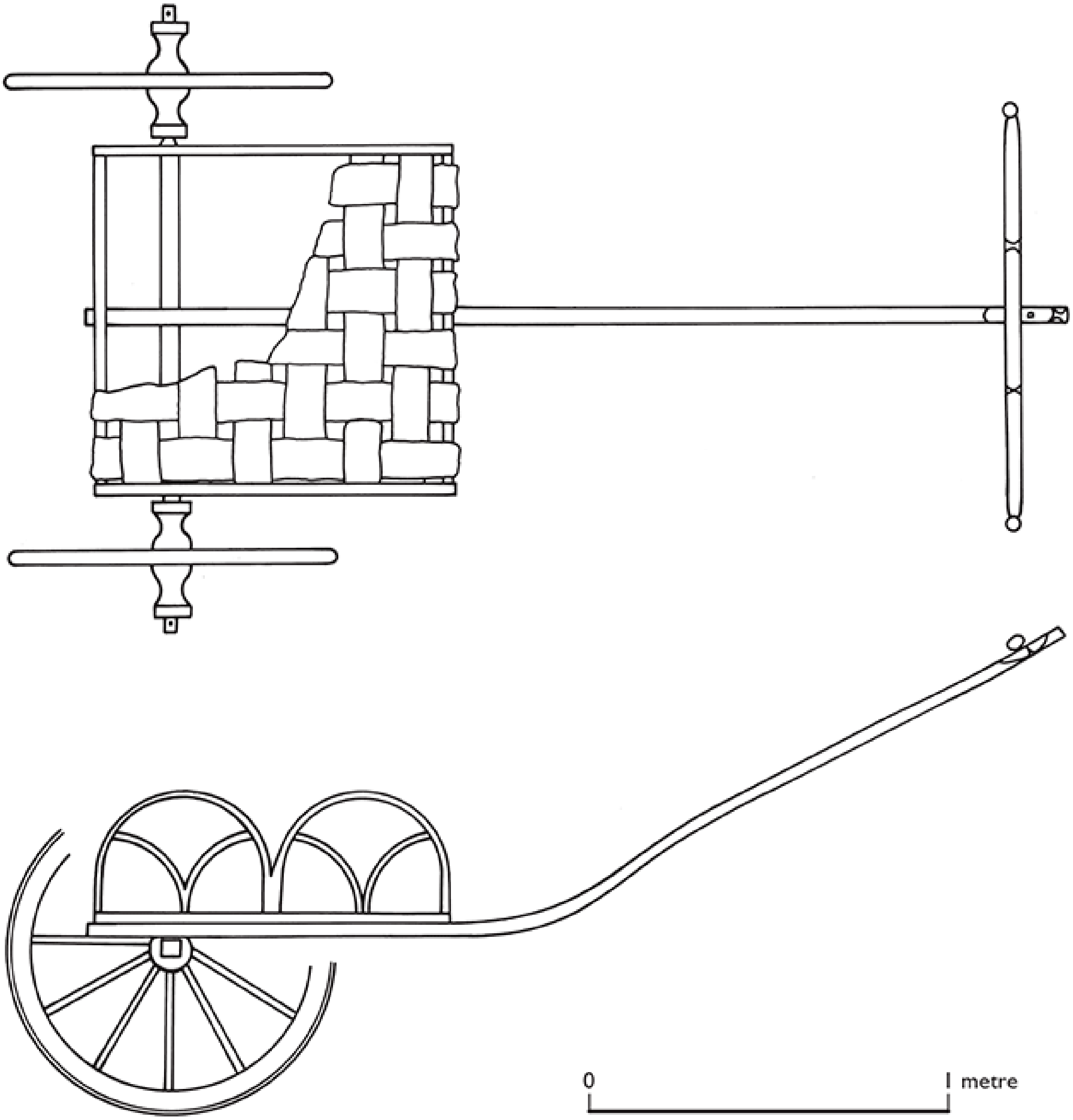
The Celtic war chariot impressed a number of observers. Diodorus describes how ‘for journeys and in battle they use two-horse chariots, the chariot carrying both charioteer and chieftain. When they meet with cavalry in battle they cast their javelins at the enemy and then descending from the chariot join battle with their swords.’ The absence of any reference to chariot warfare in Gaul during Caesar’s campaigns suggests that as a means of fighting it was no longer of significance. When, however, he crossed the Channel to Britain, he found the chariot much in evidence. He was sufficiently impressed by the novelty of the tactics involved to give an extended description of British charioteering, stressing in particular the agility of the charioteer, who, by virtue of long practice, could run out along the chariot pole between the horses and could check and change direction in a moment. The speed with which chariots could move the combatant from one point of the field to another was particularly impressive and led Caesar to make the shrewd observation, born of his military experience, that ‘they combined the staying power of infantry with the mobility of cavalry’. In Britain his chief opponent, Cassivellaunus, was able to muster 4,000 chariots, which, if used together, must have been a formidable sight.

Sufficient is known of these machines from the archaeological remains of their metal fittings and from depictions on contemporary coinage to appreciate their lightness and efficiency. The chariot was essentially a platform, carried on a pair of iron-tyred, spoked wheels about 0.9 metres in diameter, linked by a pole and yoke to two small ponies. The sides were low double hoops of bent wood or wickerwork, while the front and back were open for ease of access. The war chariot of this kind was a specialized version of the two-wheeled vehicle which became popular in the Celtic world in the fifth century BC and was used from then on in funerary rituals. Its inspiration may well have come from the Etruscan world. There is no reason, however, to assume that the funerary vehicles were war chariots. Structurally they were similar, but it is more likely that the vehicle used in burial was a parade vehicle symbolizing the high status of the deceased, though it might have been possible to convert from one use to the other.

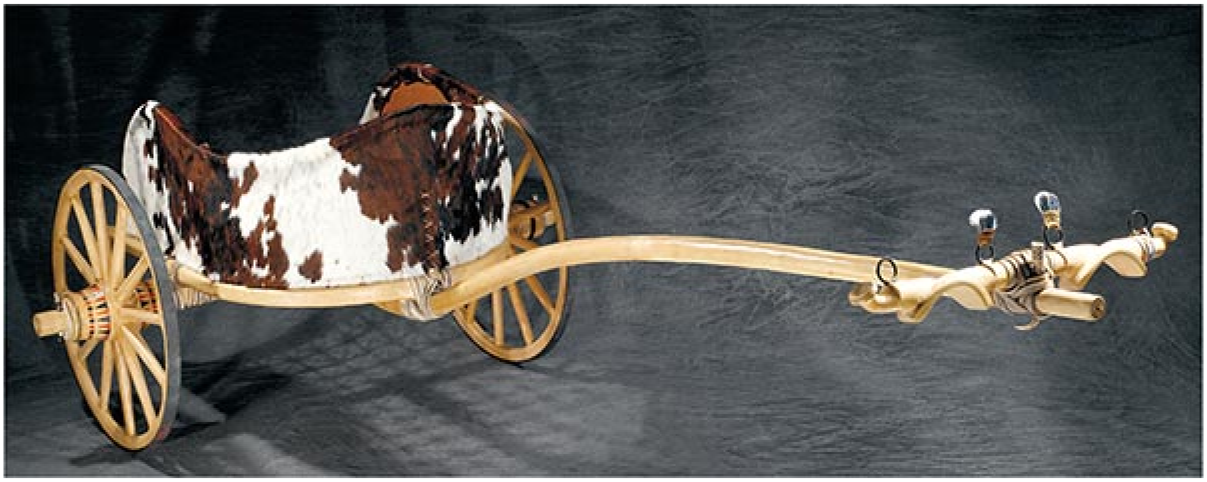
Diodorus, as we have seen, says that, when the chariot teams met with opposing cavalry, the combatants first threw their javelins and then descended from the chariot to join battle with their swords. Caesar adds that the chariots then moved off but returned when necessary to pick up the warrior and carry him to another part of the field. The chariot driver was evidently a skilled person and of vital importance to the well-being of the warrior he served. Diodorus records that the elite ‘bring into battle as their attendants, free men chosen from among the poorer classes, whom they use as charioteers and shield bearers in battle’ (*Hist.* 5. 29).



9.15 (*Above*) A Celtic war chariot shown in action on the reverse of a Roman denarius minted in *c*.48 BC. The charioteer drives the horses, while the noble warrior, naked but armed, looks for action.



9.16 (*Opposite top*) Reconstruction of a Celtic chariot (after Stuart Piggott). The essence of the vehicle is its light flexible construction designed for speed and easy manoeuvrability.



9.17 (*Opposite bottom*) Reconstruction of a La Tène chariot made by Robert Hurford and based on the remains of a chariot found in a burial at Newbridge, near Edinburgh, Scotland, dating to 450–380 BC. National Museums Scotland, Edinburgh.

A remark of Pausanias' throws some further light on the battle order. He mentions the *trimarcisia* (literally 'three riders') as a Celtic fighting unit, implying that the warrior elite were accompanied by two supporters. In this case we are dealing with a cavalry unit. The supporters would stay behind the ranks as battle proceeded ready to dash to their master's assistance if he needed a fresh horse or was wounded and, if he were seriously injured, to take his place in the battle line.

The chariot team and the *trimarcisia* imply a close and practised relationship between fighting men bound by obligation and honour, much as a knight and squire worked together in medieval warfare. In this context it is possible to understand the depth of the antagonism between the British queen Cartimandua and her husband, Venutius, when the queen left her husband in favour of Vellocatus, who was described as his 'armour bearer'. Not only was she publicly dishonouring Venutius, but she was weakening him by removing a trained and trusted member of his fighting entourage.

The Battle

The most informative description of the anthropology of the Celtic battle is provided by Diodorus Siculus (presumably using Poseidonius as a source):

> When the armies are drawn up in battle-array, they [the chiefs] are wont to advance before the battleline and to challenge the bravest of their opponents to single combat, at the same time brandishing before them their arms so as to terrify their foe. When someone accepts their challenge to battle, they loudly recite the deeds of valour of their ancestors and proclaim their own valorous quality, at the same time abusing and making little of their opponent and generally attempting to rob him beforehand of his fighting spirit.

(*Hist.* 5. 29)

A further detail is added by Athenaeus (also quoting Poseidonius) when he notes that ‘The Celts have in their company, even in war, companions whom they call parasites. These men pronounce their praises before the whole assembly and before each of the chieftains in turn as they listen.’ It was this pattern of behaviour that led Diodorus to comment that ‘they frequently exaggerate with the aim of extolling themselves and diminishing the status of others. They are boasters and threateners and given to bombastic self-dramatization’ (*Hist.* 5. 31).

Taken together, and rid of the prejudice displayed by the classical writers, these statements provide a vivid insight into the nature of Celtic warfare in its classic form, before frequent contact with Mediterranean armies brought about changes. Conflict was endemic: it was embedded in the social system, but was constrained, as it was and is in many societies, by conventions which attempted to limit hostilities to selected heroes. Through them, all society could vicariously indulge in battle. The drawing-up of the two opposing forces, with women and children looking on from the rear, provided the occasion. The individual heroes would then issue their challenges, the tension heightened by eulogies of prowess. In these tirades the satirizing of an opponent in public could be a potent weapon. Once the challenge was accepted, the combatants would engage, demonstrating their skills in full view of the assembled multitude. After a succession of contests, honour done, all could disperse. But there would have been occasions when growing tensions and perceived unfairness gave rise to all-out engagement.

This pattern of structured aggression leading to a general mÃªlÃ©e is evident in the gladiatorial contest held in the amphitheatre of Pompeii during the reign of Nero between contestants provided by Pompeii and

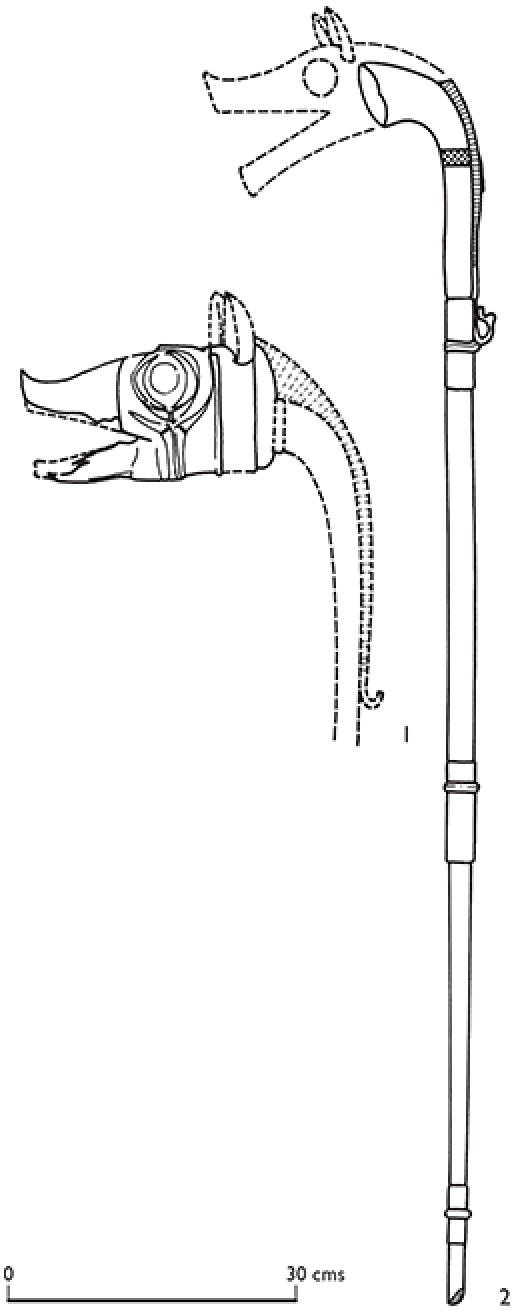
Nuceria. Dissatisfaction with the result led the spectators supporting the two sides to engage in open, and bloody, conflict. It is much the same chemistry that sometimes leads supporters to invade the football pitch.

The theme of single combat in a battle situation recurs in Livy's *History*. In 361 BC the Roman Manlius engaged in single combat with a Celt who goaded his opponent by poking out his tongue and laughing. Manlius used his short Spanish stabbing sword to good effect against the heavy Celtic slashing sword. In another tale, referring to 348 BC, the tribune Valerius confronted a Celtic chieftain, having first gained permission from the consuls to take up his opponent's challenge. As battle commenced, a crow perched on Valerius' helmet and attacked the Celt's eyes and face before returning to the helmet to watch the resulting combat. The Celt, weakened by the demonstration of divine disfavour, collapsed and was killed. For this Valerius gained the cognomen *Corvinus*. The similarity between the two stories may suggest the repetition of a single incident or even a fictitious embroidery, but that Livy knew of the tradition shows that single combat was a feature of fourth-century Celtic behaviour in Italy. As Celtic forces faced the armies of Mediterranean states, so fighting tactics changed and single combat became increasingly irrelevant. The general onslaught now became the norm, and the fierceness and power of the Celtic charge became legendary.

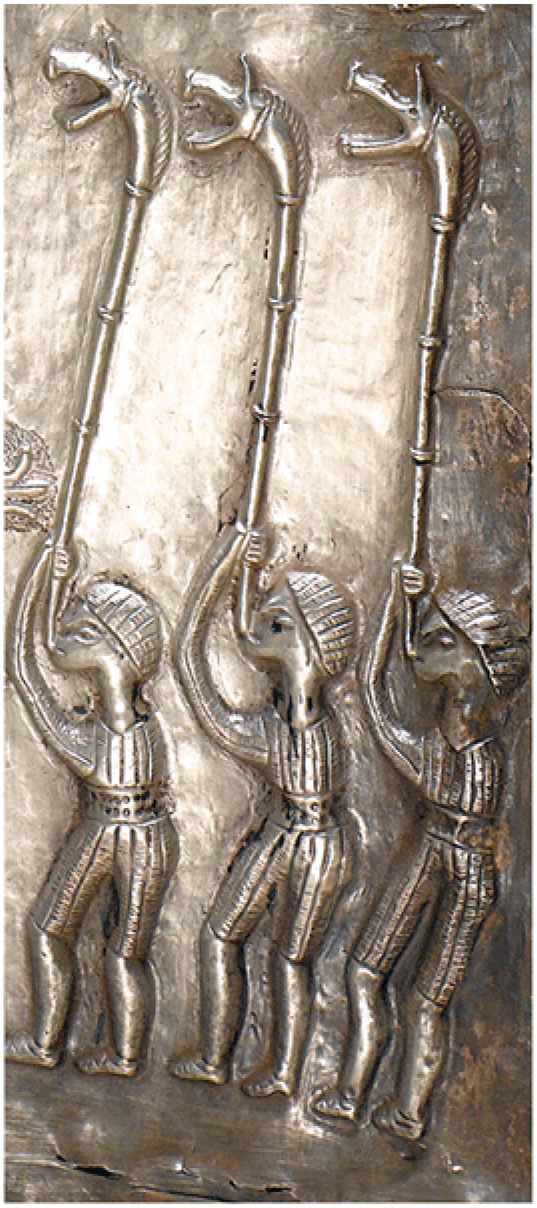
One of the recurring themes in the classical sources is the noise of the Celts in battle. The Celt who faced Manlius preceded the combat with a war dance and battle chant which almost certainly had a magico-religious significance. Similarly the war trumpets—*carnyces*—used in the opening stages of conflict were probably employed as much for ritual reasons as to strike fear into the enemy. Diodorus' description is brief: 'Their trumpets again are of a peculiar barbarian kind; they blow into them and produce a harsh sound which suits the tumult of war' (*Hist.* 5. 30). But the theme is taken up more dramatically by Polybius in his description of the battle of Telamon (225 BC). He tells how the Romans were terrified by the fine order of the Celtic army and 'the dreadful din, for there were innumerable hornblowers and trumpeters and, as the whole army were shouting their war-cries at the same time, there was such a tumult of sound that it seemed that not only the trumpeters and the soldiers but all the country round had got a voice and caught up the cry' (*Hist.* 29. 5–9). While it is too easy to read things into this picturesque description, it may have been intended to communicate the idea of the Celtic troops calling up the gods of the land to support their cause. This same sense of panic was instilled into the Roman force who faced a Celtic mob supported by their Druids shouting dreadful imprecations as the Romans prepared to attack the Druidic sanctuary on Anglesey in AD 59.

There is nothing specifically Celtic about the use of horns or battle cries. After all, in the Old Testament story, Joshua used musical instruments to good (no doubt symbolic) effect when he paraded around the walls of Jericho. Why the classical sources tend to emphasize this raucous noise is that it was alien to the more ordered and considered Greek and Roman approach to battle: it served to characterize the barbarian.

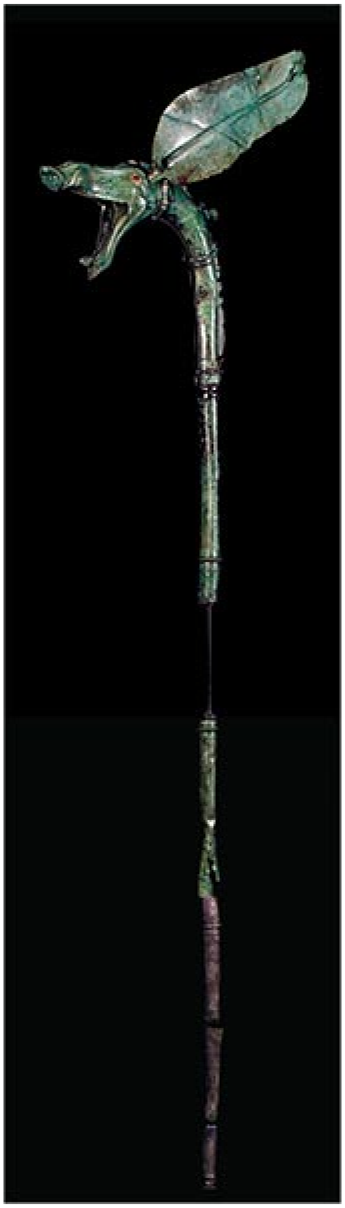
The strength of the Celtic attack lay in the ferocity of the first onslaught. It was a power driven by many things: a belief in an afterlife, a desire to gain glory, and a battle hysteria created by the crescendo of noise and chanting, often enhanced still further by alcohol—in fact the usual methods which fighting forces through the ages have used to call up courage at the moment of battle. But the fury, by its very nature, lacked control: it was impetuous but without much forethought or planning. Thus, when the onslaught was held and turned, there was no strategy in reserve to cope, and desperation set in. The misery of the Celt in defeat is recorded on a number of occasions. At Telamon, after Roman successes, some of the Celts, ‘reduced to utmost distress and complexity … in their impotent rage rushed wildly on the enemy and sacrificed their lives, while others, retreating step by step on the ranks of their comrades, threw them into disorder by their display of faint-heartedness’. This same theme recurs in the aftermath of the battle between Agricola and the native war leader Calgacus as told by Tacitus:



9.18 (*Left*) Parts of war trumpets (*carnyces*) from Deskford, Moray, Scotland (left), and Tattershall Ferry, Lincolnshire, England (right). Trumpets of this kind are shown on the Gundestrup cauldron and on various Celtic coins.



9.19 (*Opposite top*) Detail from the Gundestrup cauldron showing three men blowing *carnyces*. First century BC? Nationalmuseet, Copenhagen.



9.20 (*Opposite bottom*) *Carnyx* from a hoard at the sacred site of Tintignac, Corrèze, France, buried at the time when the site was rebuilt in the Roman period.

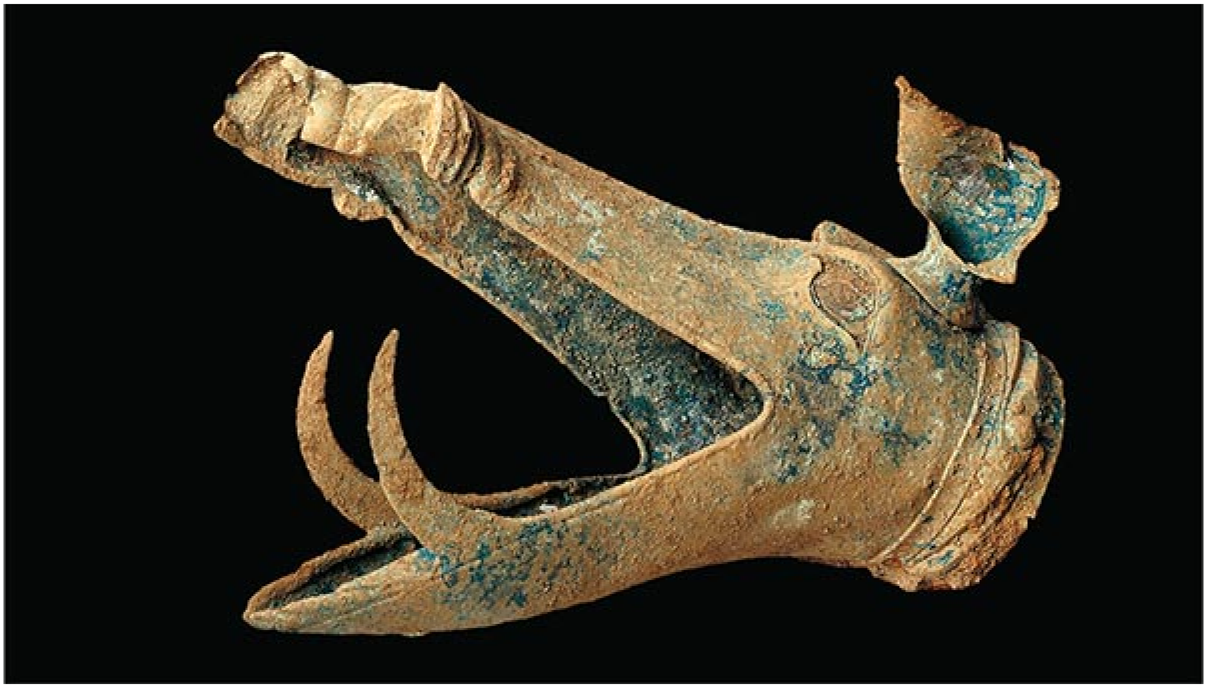
> On the enemy’s side each man now followed his bent. Some bands, though armed, fled before inferior numbers, some men, though unarmed, insisted on charging to their deaths. Armour, bodies, severed limbs lay all around and the earth reeked of blood; and the vanquished now and then found their fury and their courage again.
>
> (*Agricola* 37)

The unpredictability and unreliability of the Celt, who could at one moment be fierce and bombastic and at another flee in deranged panic, were part of the stereotype which classical writers chose to perpetuate, but that there were many occasions of steadfast heroism is not in doubt. Caesar's description of his battle against the Nervii in the second year of his Gallic War serves to redress the balance:

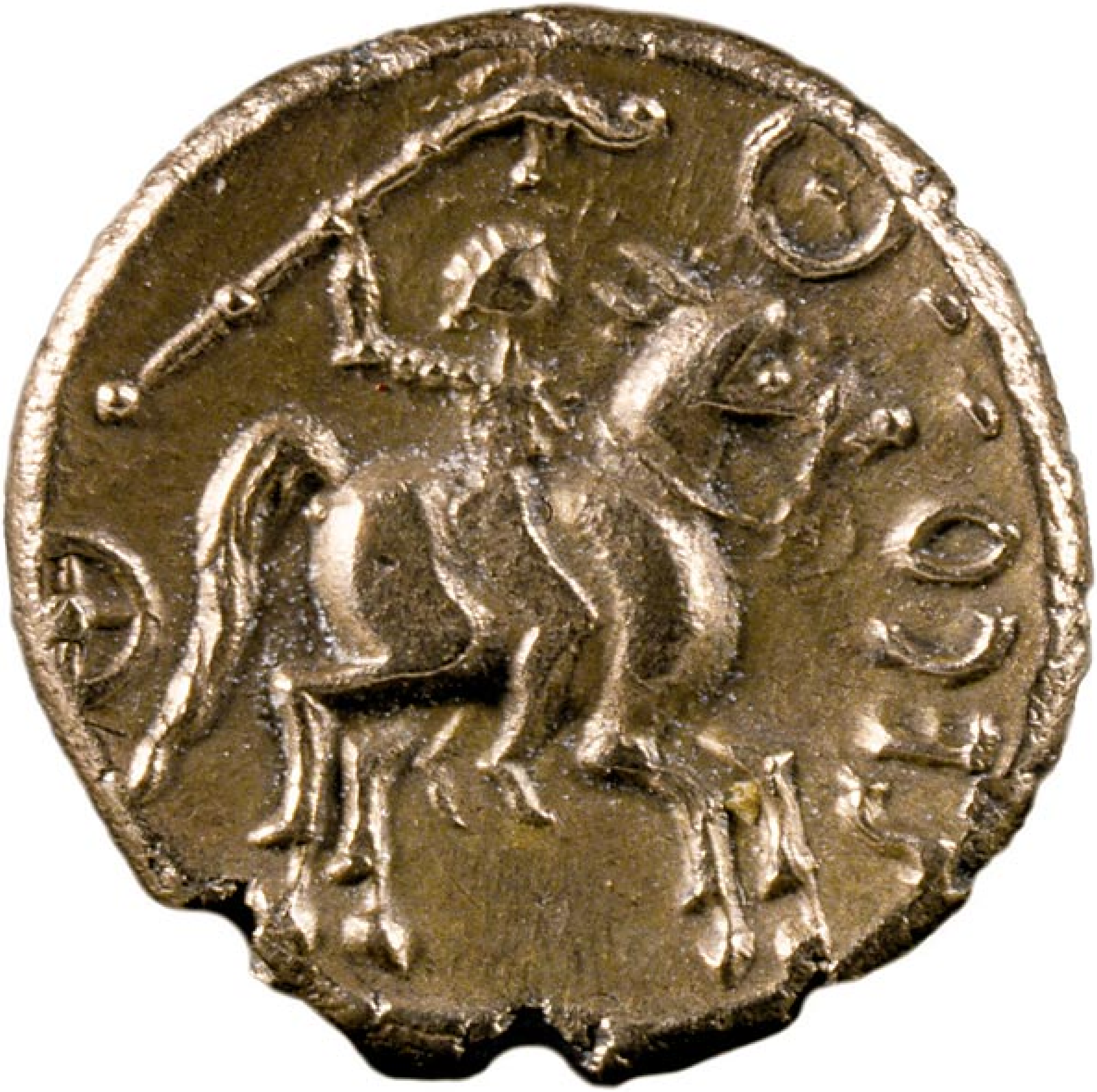
> When their front rank had fallen, the next stood on the prostrate forms and fought from them; when these were cast down and the corpses were piled up in heaps, the survivors, standing as it were upon a mound, hurled darts at our troops, or caught and returned our javelins.
>
> (*De Bello Gallico* 2. 27)

As a result of this engagement, the tribe was almost annihilated. Of the 60,000 who could bear arms, only 500 survived. Even allowing for Caesar's exaggeration, the battle of the Sambre was a heroic last stand.

Heroism is a leitmotif in classical accounts of Celtic warfare. Wounds were a source of pride and might even be opened up further by the bearer if considered to be too insignificant. Failure, particularly of a war leader, was unacceptable. The stark sculpted image of the Celt committing suicide by the body of his wife which adorned the temple of Athene at Pergamum would have reminded the Graeco-Roman world of the Celtic moral code. The recorded suicides of failed Celtic leaders are many: Brennos fleeing from Delphi, Florus and Sacrovir after the failed rebellion in Gaul, and Boudica in Britain are among the more famous. Against the social context of Celtic warfare, this is easily understood. The battle was a means of creating and enhancing warrior prowess. It was a public event in which achievement could be seen, judged, and remembered: failure subjected to the same scrutiny was unacceptable and demanded the honourable solution.



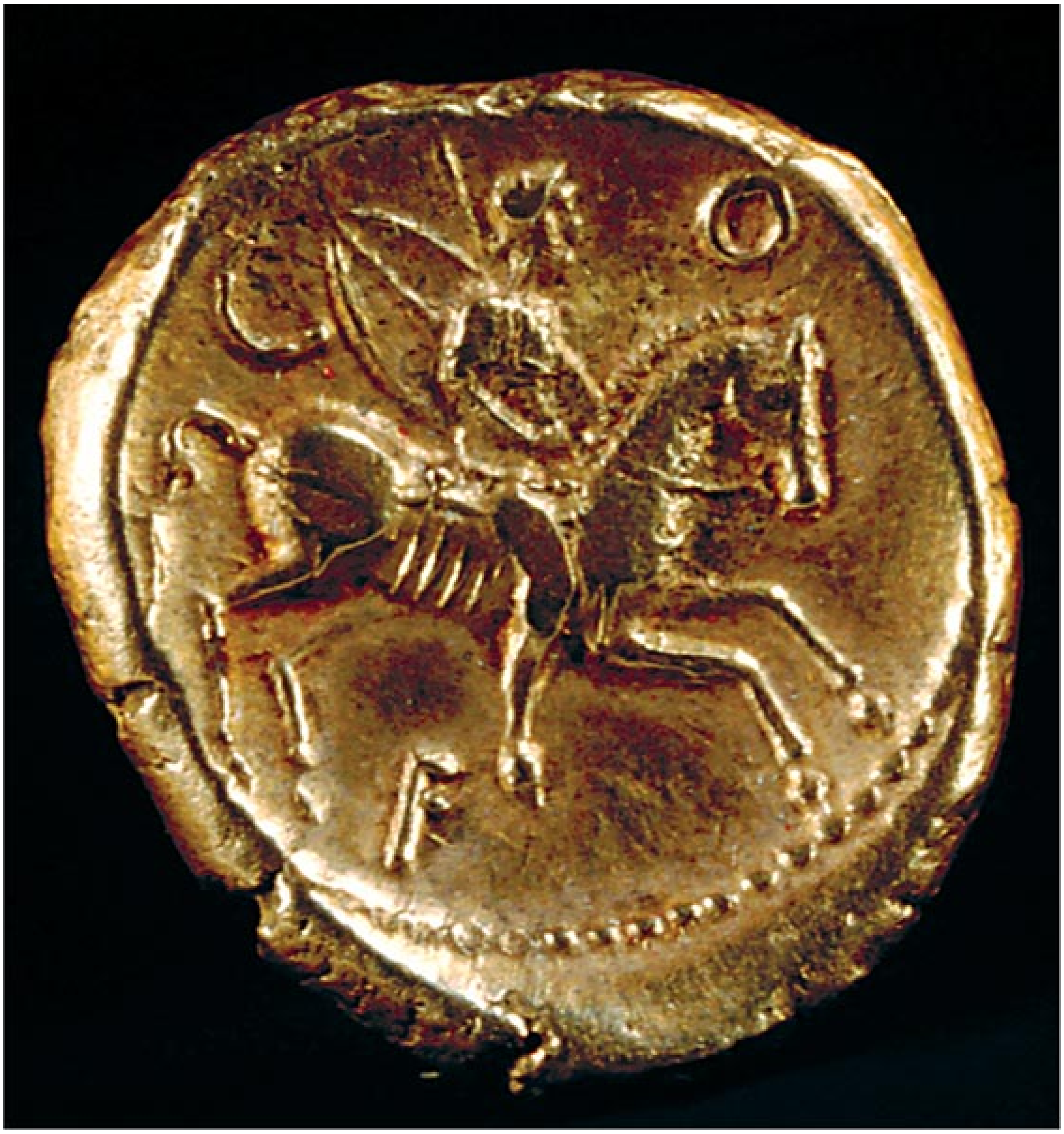
9.21 (*Above*) Another of the *carnyces* from Tintignac. In this case the animal represented is evidently a boar.



9.22 (*Below*) A gold stater of Tasciovanus, ruler of the Catuvellauni in eastern Britain about 10 BC. The horse rider holds aloft a *carnyx*.

Celtic warfare evolved in different places at different rates. Boudica and Calgacus were using methods and equipment already obsolete in the more central areas of the Celtic world several centuries earlier, and it is doubtful if the war chariot was ever seen in Ireland, in spite of its frequent appearance in the heroic vernacular literature. Similarly, the Nervii who so bravely opposed Caesar would have developed their fighting methods against neighbours and Germans, in contrast to the Volcae Tectosages of southern Gaul, whose ancestors were conversant with the hoplite army of the Greeks. Although Celtic warrior equipment remained remarkably similar over considerable areas and through time, subtle changes can be detected. By the third century BC the standard panoply became increasingly heavy, involving, it is estimated, up to five times more metal per man than two centuries earlier. The Celt at this stage was a heavily armed infantryman. The shield had developed a more elaborate and efficient umbo, and the chain by which the sword was slung from the belt had become a heavy complex structure designed to keep the sword in place, however the body moved, and to prevent the sheath from encumbering the warrior’s feet. Thus equipped, and adopting the technique of the furious frontal onslaught, the Celts were able to deal efficiently with Mediterranean armies organized on the model of the Macedonian phalanx.

During the third century cavalry began to play a significant part in Graeco-Roman warfare, and the Celts’ familiarity with the horse, which was long established, made them a sought-after addition as specialized mercenaries. Hannibal was to make good use of heavily armed Celtic cavalry during the Second Punic War. The growing importance of the cavalry is reflected in a marked increase in the length of the sword, many examples of which, by the end of the century, had reached 80–90 centimetres—too long for comfort in infantry fighting.



9.23 A gold stater of Verica, who ruled the Atrebates in central southern Britain in the years leading up to the Roman invasion in AD 43. The reverse of the coin shows a mounted warrior armed with a large shield and a spear and wearing a helmet. Institut national de recherches archÃ©ologiques prÃ©ventives, Paris.

The battle of Telamon in 225 BC in many ways marks a turning-point. It is the last recorded battle on the continent of Europe in which the chariot appeared, and one in which Celtic cavalry, separately deployed, was to play a significant part. Thereafter, as cavalry became increasingly important, it is likely that the chariot began to decline, disappearing altogether by the beginning of the first century BC except among the insular Britons. During Caesar’s campaigns in Gaul, detachments of Gallic cavalry were widely used on both sides, and after Romanization Gaul provided some of the most effective cavalry *auxilia* in the Roman army.

The Feast

Central to the establishment and maintenance of the social equilibrium was the feast. The feast was a social gathering at which status and prestige were demonstrated, flaunted, and challenged. The Poseidonian tradition provides an outline of procedure. At a feast the men sat in a circle with the most influential member, judged on the basis of military prowess, nobility of birth, or wealth, occupying the central position. Beside him sat the host and next, on either side, the others in the order of their distinction. It appears that each man had two retainers present: his shield man, who took up a position behind his master, and his spear man. The spear men dined together but in the same room as their masters.

Poseidonius (in Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae* 4. 40) records three behavioural practices. The first is the hero’s portion, in which the beast is cut and served according to status. ‘When the hindquarters were served up, the bravest hero took the thigh piece and if another man claimed it they stood up and fought in single combat to death.’ This, he notes, was the practice in ‘former times’. It is a motif which is to be found several times in the vernacular tradition of Ireland, in famous stories like Bricriu’s feast and Mac Dathó’s pig. The second, which may have grown out of the first, was aggressive confrontation. Sometimes single combat took place, as a result of which people could be wounded or killed. The third practice was more extreme. A man might pledge his life for gifts of gold, silver, or amphorae of wine. When the deal had been done, he would distribute the gifts among family and friends and would then lie stretched out face upwards on his shield, ‘while another standing by cut [his] throat with his sword’.

These anecdotal scraps belie the social complexity of the feast but provide some indication of its importance in Celtic society. The feast was evidently a highly structured affair organized rigorously according to status. The arrangement of the participants and the serving of the meat provided the occasions for the definition of the social hierarchy and its public affirmation. If anyone felt demeaned by the ordering, he would contest it, and the ensuing conflict could lead to single combat and death. In any event, the contest would be resolved in the public arena, and thereafter the new order would be known to all present. Clearly, then, the feast provided the opportunity for an aspiring young man to make his claim and to demonstrate the power and the following to sustain it. The feast may well have been the moment when a warrior would propose to lead a raid and would gather support from those present. The size of his following would depend upon his status and the degree of inebriation of the assembly. Just such a practice is recorded by Tacitus among the Germans. Failure to meet assurances made at the feast would bring disgrace.

In such a context there is the need for the individual to proclaim his virtues before the assembled company. The Poseidonian tradition refers to this when it says that the Celts frequently exaggerated with the aim of extolling themselves and diminishing opponents. Others could be employed to do this for them, such as the ‘parasites’ who accompanied their masters in war and peace to pronounce their praises to the whole assembly and, no doubt, to denigrate their lord’s rivals through satire. The bards are to be distinguished from these dependent followers. They were part of the skilled elite—the entertainers and ‘poets who delivered eulogies in song’. The value of the praises of such men would be greater than that of the subservient parasites, and one can anticipate the tension that there must have been at a feast, when the bard started to perform, to see whom he would choose to praise and how he would use his skills to balance his eulogies between those he considered to be worthy of them. Part of his skill would have been to keep his audience on tenterhooks until the last moment. To cultivate such men was important to an aspiring leader. The Arvernian chief Louernius was well aware of this when the bard who arrived late at his feast composed a song to the chief’s greatness, lamenting his own late arrival. Louernius was sufficiently judicious to throw the bard a bag of gold as he ran behind his chariot and was rewarded by another song based on the theme that even the ‘tracks made by his chariot on the earth gave gold and largesse to mankind’. It would have been in Louernius’ interests that this song remained prominent in the bard’s repertoire!

The feast which Louernius prepared and the gold which he liberally distributed is a fascinating demonstration of the ‘potlatch’—the system by which an individual’s status was enhanced by the public dispersal of wealth in the form of gifts, often, but not invariably, of food and drink at feasts. The more that was given away, the greater the giver’s reputation, and the more he would, in turn, acquire through gift. At its most basic level, the potlatch provided a simple redistribution mechanism by which surpluses could be spread throughout the community. Often, however, it necessitated the destruction of wealth. The dedication to the gods of works displaying great craft skill, like the Battersea shield, or of great value, like the Snettisham gold, provides examples of wealth destruction within a religious context. Similarly, the burial of valuable goods with the dead was the public affirmation of a lineage’s ability to destroy wealth. The feast itself, with the consumption of huge quantities of expensive imported wine, of which the Celts were so inordinately fond, was another form of public wealth destruction.

In a system in which individuals used the potlatch as a means of competing for status there would, inevitably, have been a tendency towards escalation. It is probably in this context that we should attempt to understand the Poseidonian account of the individuals who submitted themselves to death having acquired and distributed rich gifts. By sacrificing their lives solely in the interests of being able to redistribute the gifts they had received to their friends and kin, they were indulging in an extreme form of potlatch. The heady competitive atmosphere of the feast, the liberal consumption of alcohol, and a belief in the afterlife will all have contributed to the individual’s willingness to submit to death in the interests of renown.

9.24 Bronze cauldron with its iron suspension chain and hooks found at the site of La Tène, NeuchÃ¢tel, Switzerland. Third or second century BC. Cauldrons of this kind would have formed the focus of the feast. MusÃ©e cantonal d’archÃ©ologie, NeuchÃ¢tel, Switzerland.

Hospitality to strangers is another leitmotif of Celtic society, and the Poseidonian tradition refers to the need to offer food and drink before finding out about a visitor’s business. The rigorous rules which no doubt covered hospitality were manipulated by the Romans more than once in tricking and slaughtering Lusitanians and Celtiberians in Spain and by Mithridates in the massacre of the tetrarchs in Galatia. In all these cases the Celtic peoples were bound by custom and tradition to a system involving trust which their opponents simply abused for their own advantage.

The Social Hierarchy

That Celtic society was strongly hierarchic is evident from the archaeological record of burials. It is also reflected in Caesar’s stark generalization that in Gaul only two classes were of any significance, the Druids and the knights, the rest being little better than slaves. The knights were constantly involved in warfare, their status being reflected by the number of dependants and clients they could command. Caesar’s sketch is a gross oversimplification, but it reflects a simple basic structure which may well have lain behind the social systems of many of the Celtic communities. The social hierarchy was graded from the semi-free, who were roughly equivalent to medieval bondsmen, to those who could command huge entourages, men like the Helvetian Orgetorix, whose ‘household’ numbered 10,000 excluding his dependants and debtors. Within this spectrum would have been carefully distinguished social classes about which little is known. The law gave a degree of rigidity to the system, but there would have been much visual symbolism to make the social distinction readily apparent in such things as settlement style and dress. These symbols of status, and indeed the social system itself, would have differed with place and time, but one may suppose that the possession of a panoply of arms was a ready and universal means of distinction, similarly the wearing of a torc and arm rings. Another hint is provided by Poseidonius when, describing tonsorial styles, he remarks that ‘the nobles shave the cheeks but let the moustache grow freely so that it covers the mouth’. This may well have served to distinguish the elite from the others who shaved entirely or grew short beards. The prominence of the moustache in Celtic iconography and Graeco-Roman representations of Celts may suggest that the practice was widespread among the Celtic elite. Caesar’s reference to the fact that the Britons painted their bodies with woad implies that body decoration may have been common and carried with it social messages. The use of tattooing among many societies, including the contemporary Scythians, is a reminder of the significance of this form of communication.

The importance of bonds of obligation among the Gauls, operating at a number of different levels, is frequently referred to by Caesar. At one level, clientage in its various forms could bind retainers to individual members of the elite, but at a different level it could relate tribes one to another. This was clearly the case in Gaul in the first century BC. By Caesar's time the Sequani had established themselves as paramount, with the help of the Germans, and thus had acquired as clients many of the smaller tribes, who previously had looked to the Aedui, taking the sons of their chieftains as hostages. When Caesar appeared and offered the Aedui the support of Rome, the hostages were returned and the clients flocked back to the Aedui, together with new clients impressed by the enhanced power the Aedui derived from their friendship with Rome. At the same time, the Remi, thought to be clients of Rome, received clients of their own who wished to ally themselves to the Roman cause but were not prepared to do so as clients of the Aedui. This broad pattern of changing allegiances seems to have been the norm in Gaul and was probably widespread in the Celtic world.

Clientage, at the tribal or personal level, implied obligations on both sides. As Caesar succinctly put it: 'The leaders do not allow their clients to be oppressed or defrauded, otherwise they lose their influence with their clients.' The clear implication here is that clientage was an agreement entered into willingly by both parties. Both were probably bound by strict rules as well as by the anticipation of mutual benefit.

The taking of hostages, referred to above, was equally widespread. It did not, however, bear the connotations it has in the modern world. Among the Celts, hostages were usually young men of noble families from one tribe who lived and served with another as a guarantee of agreed behaviour between the tribes: it was, in fact, a bonding mechanism. Caesar made ample use of the system during his conquests in Gaul, accepting or requesting hostages whenever agreements were reached. The case of the Treveri is instructive. In 54 BC, suspicious of the motives of one of the Treverian leaders, Indutiomarus, Caesar ordered the chief to attend his camp and to bring 200 hostages with him. 'The hostages were delivered, and included his son and all his relatives who had been specified by name.

I reassured Indutiomarus about their safety and encouraged him to stay loyal.' At the same time 4,000 Gaulish cavalry arrived from all parts of Gaul, each group with its own leaders. Those whose allegiance to Rome was in any way in doubt Caesar decided to take with him, as hostages, on his British campaign. Dumnorix, a chieftain of the Aedui, refused to join and fled with his cavalry, but was pursued, captured, and executed, even though he was a brother of the Aeduian leader Diviciacus, a staunch Roman ally.

Although it can fairly be argued that Caesar's use of hostages may have been extreme because of the unusual nature of events, he was simply adapting for his own benefit a practice common among the Gaulish tribes.

Two other aspects of the bonding system—fosterage and marriage—deserve to be mentioned. The placing of children with foster parents is a theme constantly referred to in Irish vernacular literature, where the close bonds between foster brothers are used to heighten literary effect. In all probability fosterage was practised by Celtic communities quite widely, though there is very little positive evidence for it outside the Insular literature. There is, however, one somewhat obscure reference by Caesar. In writing of the Gauls he says that they differ from other peoples in 'that they do not allow their sons to approach them in public unless they have grown up to the age of military service, and they think it a disgrace for a boy under this age to sit in public within sight of his father' (*De Bello Gallico* 6. 18). Poseidonius, however (through Diodorus Siculus), mentions that at meals they are served by their youngest grown-up children, both boys and girls. The apparent contradiction can be resolved if the meal is considered to be a private occasion, when such intimacy is permissible. Whether or not this passage of Caesar's is an ill-understood observation of the taboos associated with active fosterage is unclear, but it could equally be that fosterage had, by this stage, died out in Gaul and all that remained was pale echoes reflected in symbolic behaviour patterns.

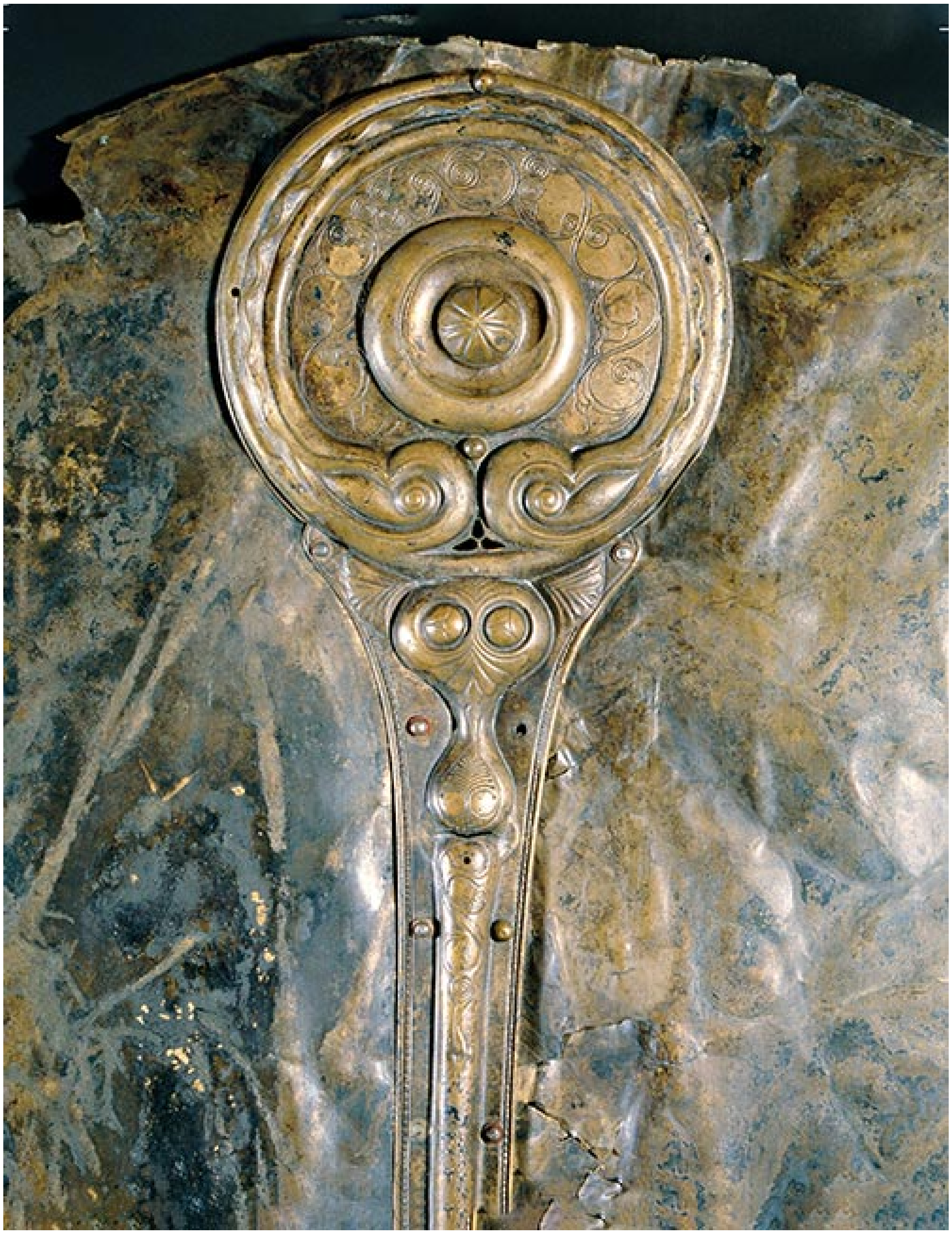
Women clearly occupied a more significant position in Celtic society than they did in the Graeco-Roman world and for this reason the classical sources give some prominence to observations about them, though in no systematic way. The Poseidonian tradition notes the beauty of Gallic women, describing them to be as tall and as strong as their husbands, though the fourth-century Roman writer Ammianus Marcellinus, in a memorable piece of descriptive writing about a Celtic woman raised to anger, implies that as a fighter she is more than equal to the male (*Hist.* 15. 12. 1). A tendency to promiscuity is noted. ‘They generally yield up their virginity to others and this they regard not as a disgrace, but rather think themselves slighted when someone refuses to accept their freely offered favours’ (Diodorus Siculus, *Hist.* 5. 32). To this, Caesar, writing of the Britons, adds that wives are shared between groups of ten or twelve men, especially between brothers, fathers, and sons. Once more the literary references are likely to be ill-observed and misleading, content simply to convey an impression of ‘the barbarian’. Behind this probably lies a complex structure of male–female relationships beyond the comprehension of monogamous Mediterraneans. Something of the intricacies of these bonds are preserved in the Irish vernacular literature. In the *Táin*, Queen Medb is prepared to offer intercourse in the interests of friendship or gain without any sense of shame, while in the Old Irish Laws three grades of wife are recognized.

In Gaul, females had legal rights in marriage. A joint account was kept of the marriage wealth, composed of the bride’s dowry, an equal sum contributed by the husband, and any interest accruing. Whoever survived the marriage inherited the total. The equity of the arrangement must, however, have been somewhat diminished by the fact that the husband had the power of life or death over his wife and children and if husbands died in suspicious circumstances wives could be interrogated under torture. We owe this insight to Caesar without being able to test the veracity of his account or the extent of the practice.

Marriage provided an important means of social and cross-tribal bonding. The Helvetian Orgetorix, for example, in attempting to consolidate his power base, gave his daughter in marriage to the Aeduian leader Dumnorix, while Dumnorix married off his half-sister and other female relatives to prominent men in other tribes. A little earlier, the sister of the king of Noricum had been married to the German leader Ariovistus to cement a political alliance in the face of the Dacian advance. This use of the female relative in bond by marriage in the manner of a hostage was no doubt as widespread among the Celts as it was later to become among the royal households of Europe.

Women do not appear in positions of overt political power in Gaul at the time of Caesar’s campaigns, unless he chooses not to record the fact, but in Britain Cartimandua of the Brigantes and Boudica of the Iceni were potent leaders, and the large bulk of Boudica, with her harsh voice and the mass of red hair falling to her knees, resplendent in a gold torc and bright cloak, remains a lasting image of Celtic female power. Whether we are looking at the aberrant behaviour of a peripheral backwater in a time of unnatural stress or the survival of a phenomenon once more widespread throughout the Celtic world is difficult to say. The dominance of females in the Insular literature might, however, be thought to support the latter.

It must readily be admitted that any consideration of Celtic social systems is likely to be biased, not only by the prejudices and preconceptions of the Graeco-Roman sources but by the narrow time span and geographical area over which they range. None the less, it is possible to construct an outline of the way in which society articulated itself. We must, however, constantly remind ourselves that no general scheme can ever hope to apply to all Celtic societies at all times.

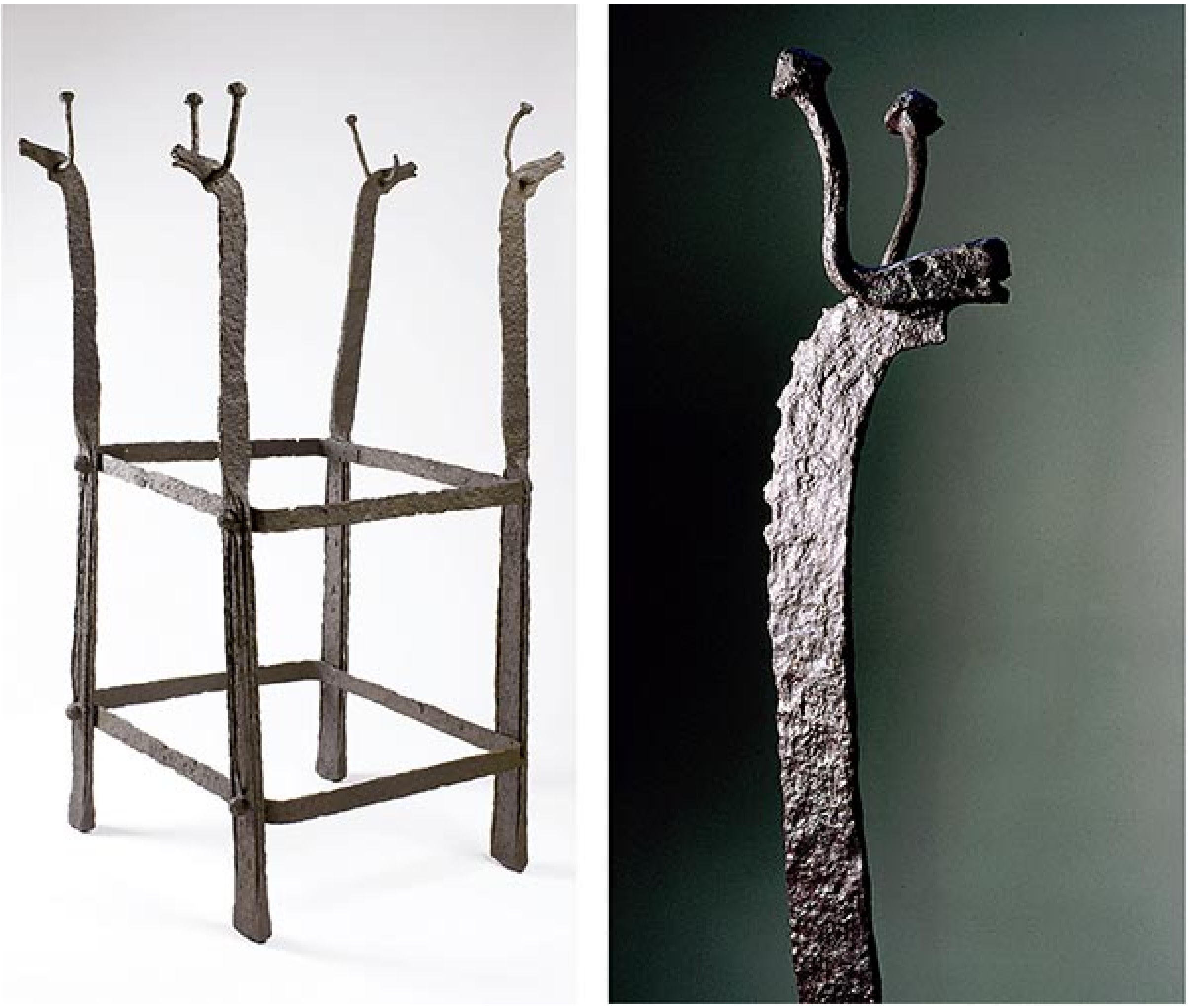


10

The Arts of the Migration Period

TWO things in particular stand out from viewing the archaeological record of the La Tène period in Europe: the broad cultural similarity that can be seen over vast tracts of country and the dazzling inventiveness of what can broadly be called La Tène (or Celtic) art. We must be careful here to distinguish the technology of construction and manipulation of materials from the love of pure decoration. The two are strictly separate but they may sometimes come together to enhance each other and create a greater whole. Take, for example, the simple functional fire-dog—a piece of wrought-iron furniture for the hearth. It was essentially a framework for controlling roasting spits, but its projecting ends were frequently decorated with enormous skill to create the spirited essence of horned bulls' heads. In another medium, the large pottery jar from Saint-Pol-de-Léon in Finistère is an elegant and functional vessel, but it has been transformed into an object of beauty by a series of flowing scrolls and arabesques lightly incised on the body before firing.

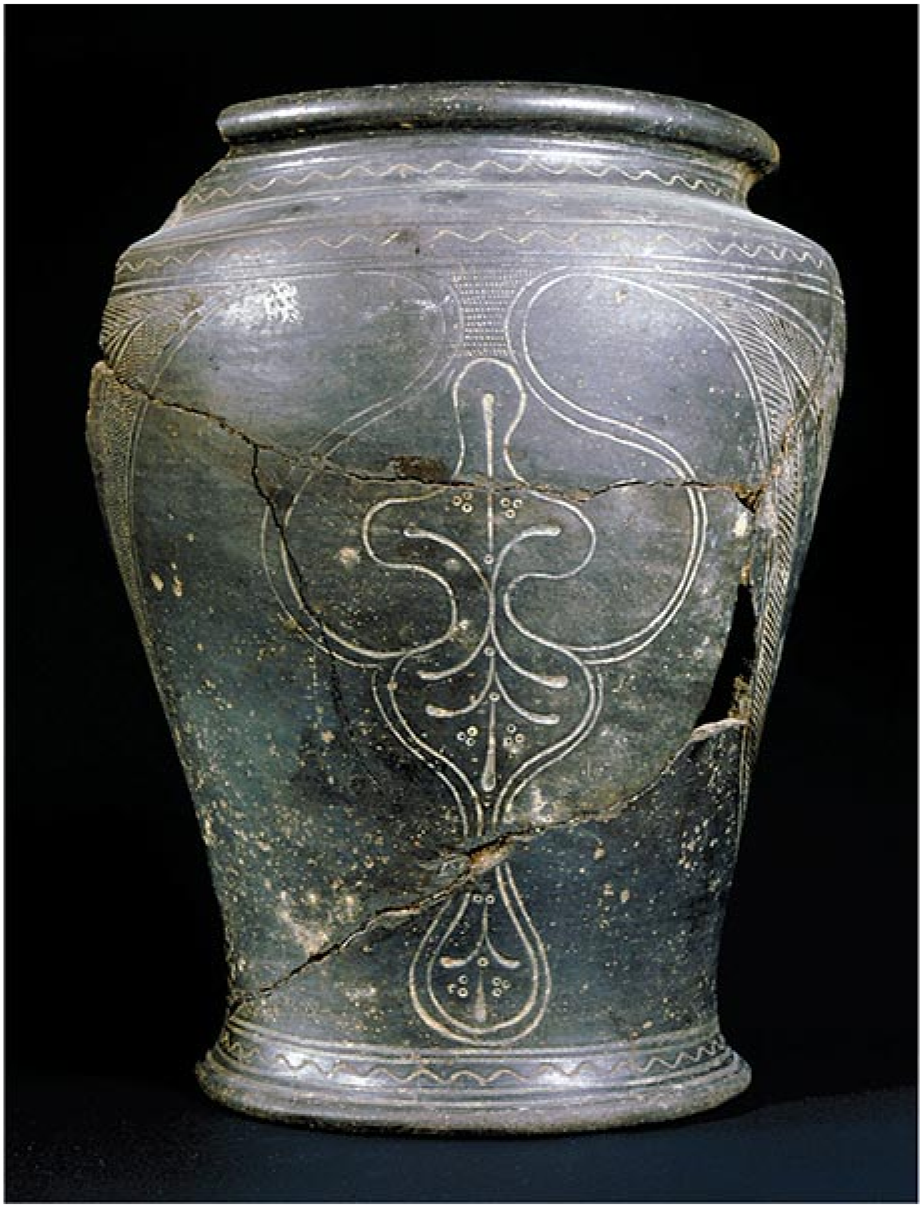
The fire-dog and the pot are both highly satisfying to the modern eye—there is something about Celtic art with which we can easily empathize—but this should not persuade us into the facile belief that simply by describing and classifying we can understand. The quintessential bovine head on the fire-dog is a symbol, but of what? The sanctity of the hearth? The spirit of the beasts being roasted? The power of fire and of the smith's magic? We can never know. So it is with the decorated pot. To the archaeologist it is an item first to admire and enjoy and then to analyse stylistically, but the response of the original owner would have been totally different. One has only to consider decorated pots from Africa, whose meanings have been transmitted to us in language by their makers or users, to understand that form and decoration embody subtle meanings in their contemporary society, symbolizing function, status of owner, gender, sexual relationship, and so on. It is totally beyond the abilities of the art historian or even the archaeologist to say what the owner of the Saint-Pol-de-Léon pot was attempting to communicate. All that we can be reasonably sure about is that communication was intended.



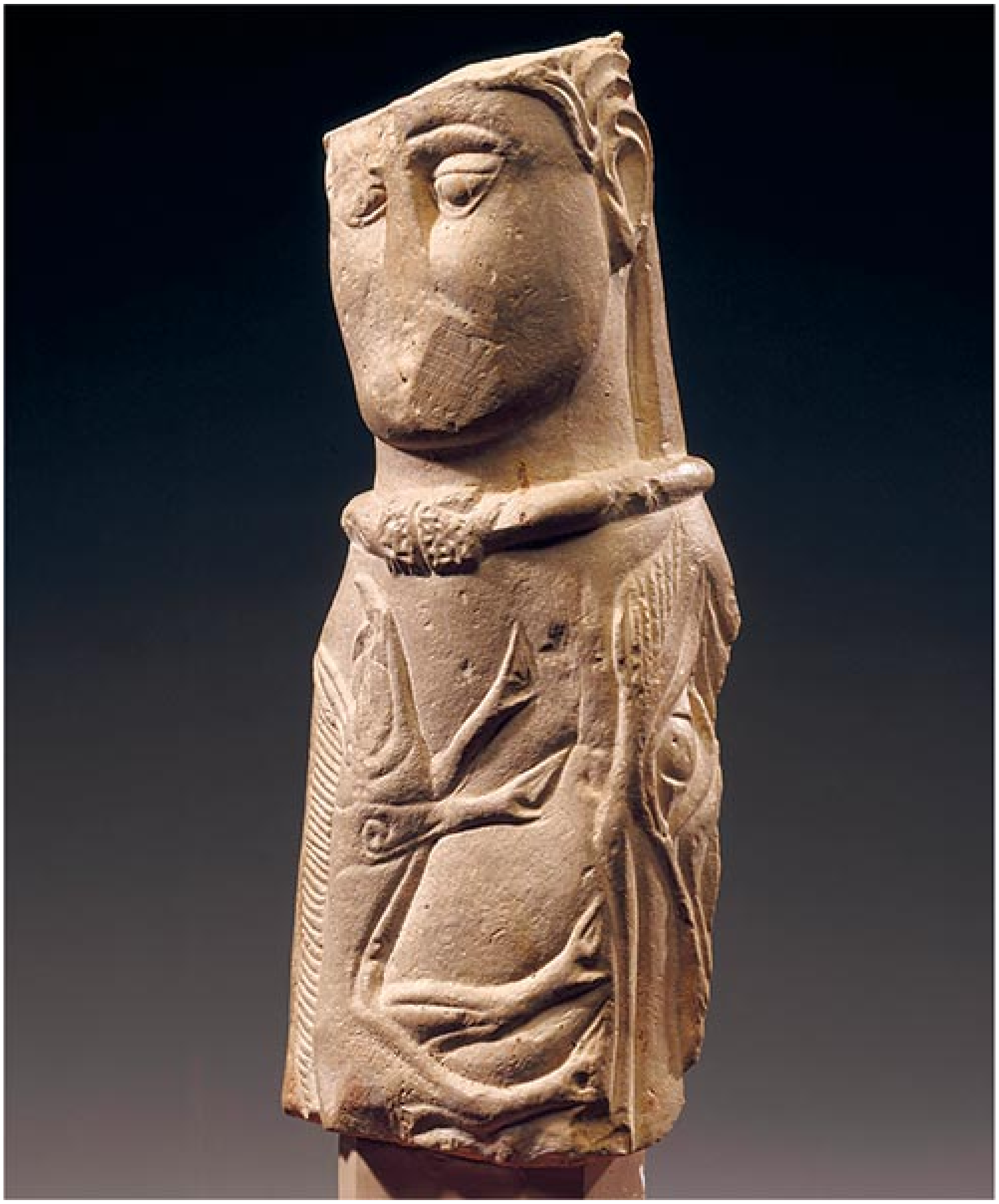
10.1 Iron furniture from a rich grave at Welwyn, Hertfordshire, England. Second half of the first century BC. The picture on the right shows the detail of a fire-dog, a pair of which would have stood on either side of the hearth. British Museum, London.

If, then, we reject ‘art for art’s sake’ as a starting-point (and with it the even less acceptable ‘art for art historians’ sake’), it is pertinent to ask, how readily understood was the symbolism at the time? Was it known to all or only to a few, like the skilled men whose magic went into its creation?

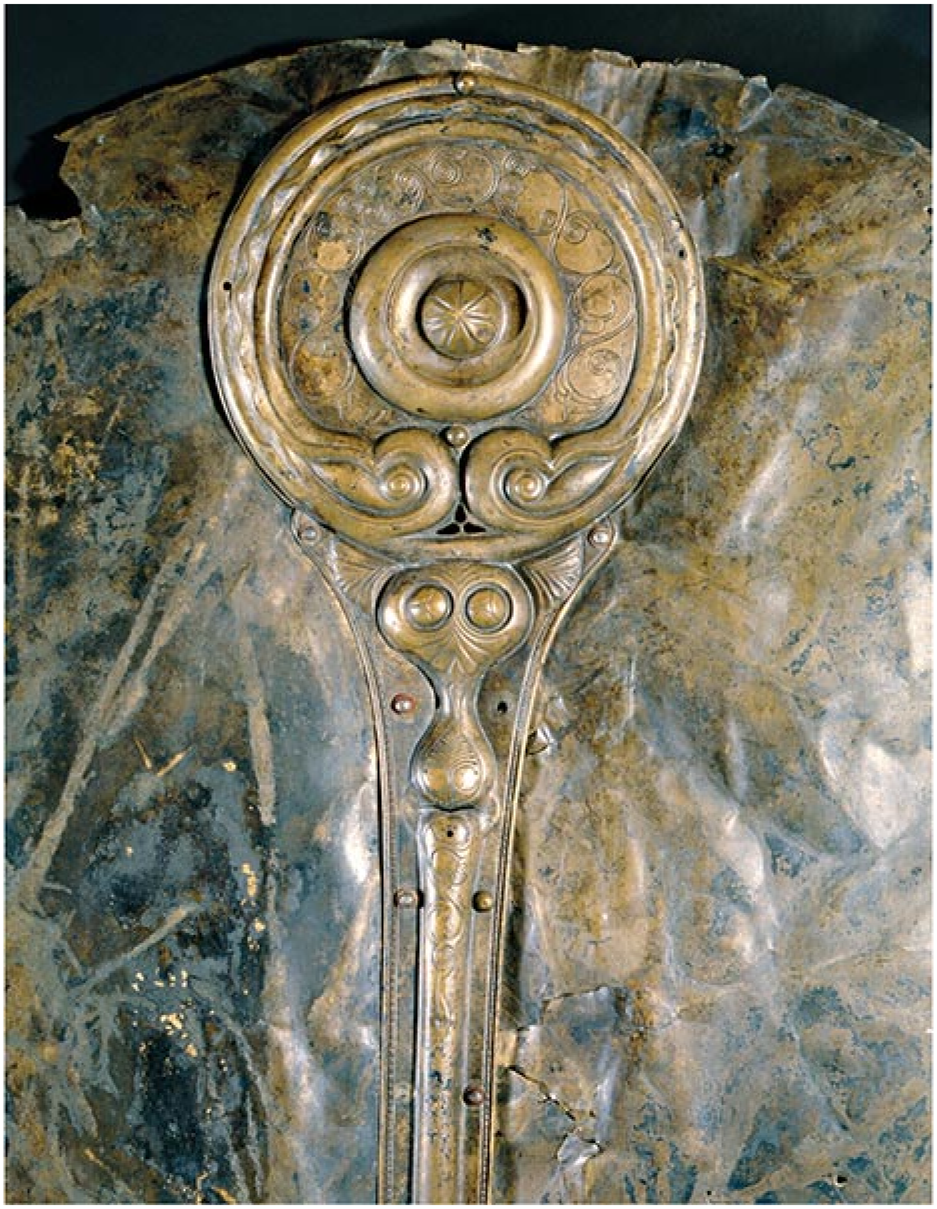
The remarkable iron helmet of the early third century BC found in the chieftain's tomb at Ciumesşti provides an interesting example. On its crest stands a bird of prey, with articulating wings, staring fixedly with its violent red eyes at anyone who approaches the wearer. It is a startling reminder of the story of the single combat between Valerius and the Celt (see p. 227). The symbolism of the bird on the helmet of the Ciumesşti chieftain would have been widely understood. So, too, would the symbol of the boar, found on helmet crests on the Witham shield, on a sword blade from Switzerland, on the statue of the god from Euffigneix, and in a variety of other contexts. The primeval strength and ferocity of the beast would have been seen to give strength and protection to the wearer, and it is likely that the boar, like the crow, would have been understood to be a war god in animal form. The shape-shifting of gods and the semi-divine, between human and animal form, is a recurring theme in the Irish and Welsh vernacular literature.



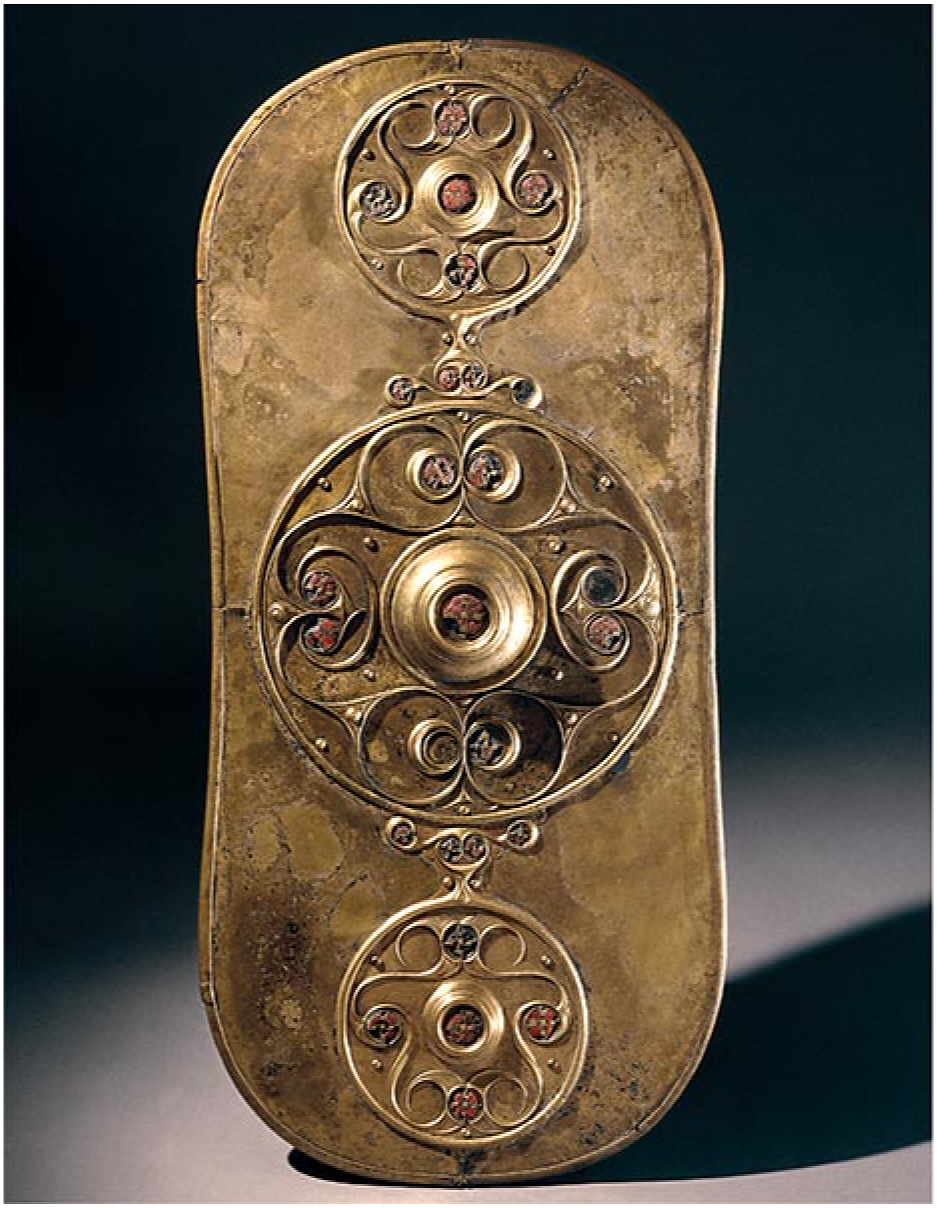
10.2 (Top) Pottery vessel found in the barrow of Kernevez near Saint-Pol-de-Léon, Finistère, France. The style of decoration is closely similar to that adopted by metalworkers in the fourth century BC. Musée des Jacobins, Morlaix.



10.3 (Bottom) Stone statue of a deity wearing a neck torc from Euffigneix, Haute-Marne, France. The boar figure carved in relief on the body is probably a symbol of the deity’s strength. First century BC? Musée d’archéologie nationale, Saint-Germain-en-Laye, Paris.



10.4 (Left) Bronze shield found in the river Witham near Washingborough, Lincolnshire, England. (See Fig. 9.10.) The end roundel illustrated in detail shows the careful interplay of repoussé and inscribed decoration. The roundel is ‘carried’ on the head of a fabulous beast. Third or second century BC. British Museum, London.

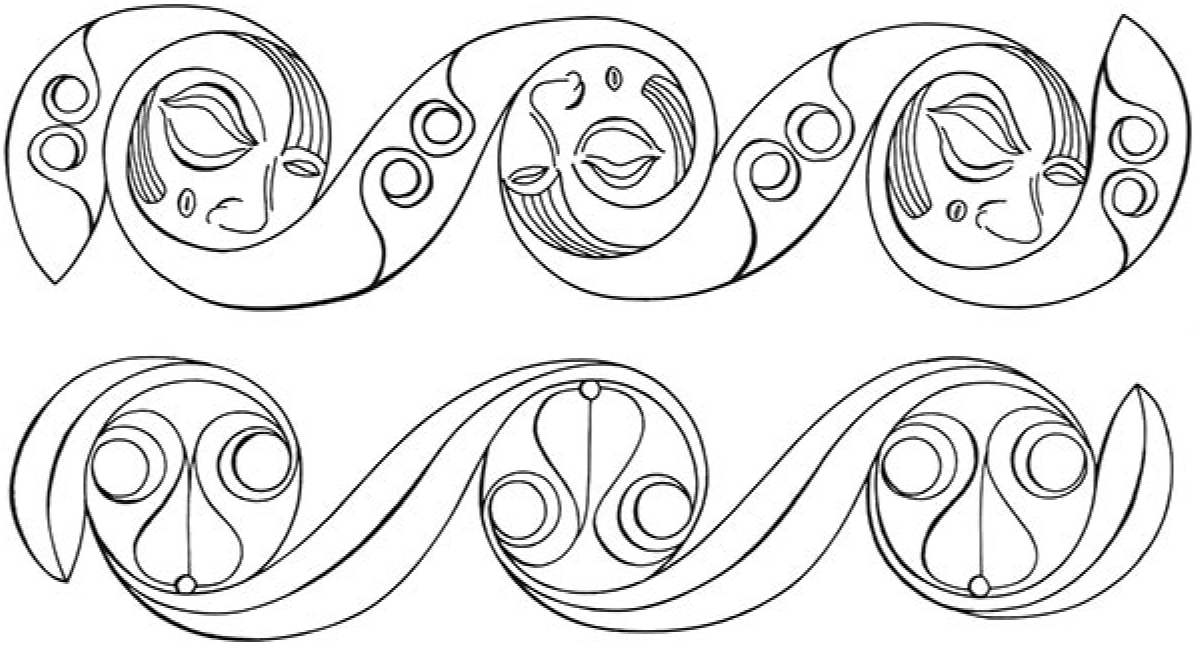


10.5 (Right) The Battersea shield, found in the river Thames at Battersea, London. The shield facing of copper alloy sheeting is elaborately decorated and enhanced with inset red glass. The date is uncertain but probably lies in the first century BC or early first century AD, although an earlier dating is possible. The shield was probably ritually deposited. British Museum, London.

Herein might lie a clue to another aspect of Celtic art—the appearance of human and other faces glimpsed half-hidden in Celtic designs. The Battersea and Witham shields provide good examples, but ghostly faces stare out of many other designs when carefully observed. The art historian Paul Jacobsthal once referred to this as the 'Cheshire Cat Style'—

sometimes the cat appears in the tree, sometimes just the grin of the cat. He went on to describe it as the mechanism of dreams. Perhaps here, too, we are glimpsing the shifting shapes of Celtic mythology where visions appear and disappear and nothing is quite as it seems.

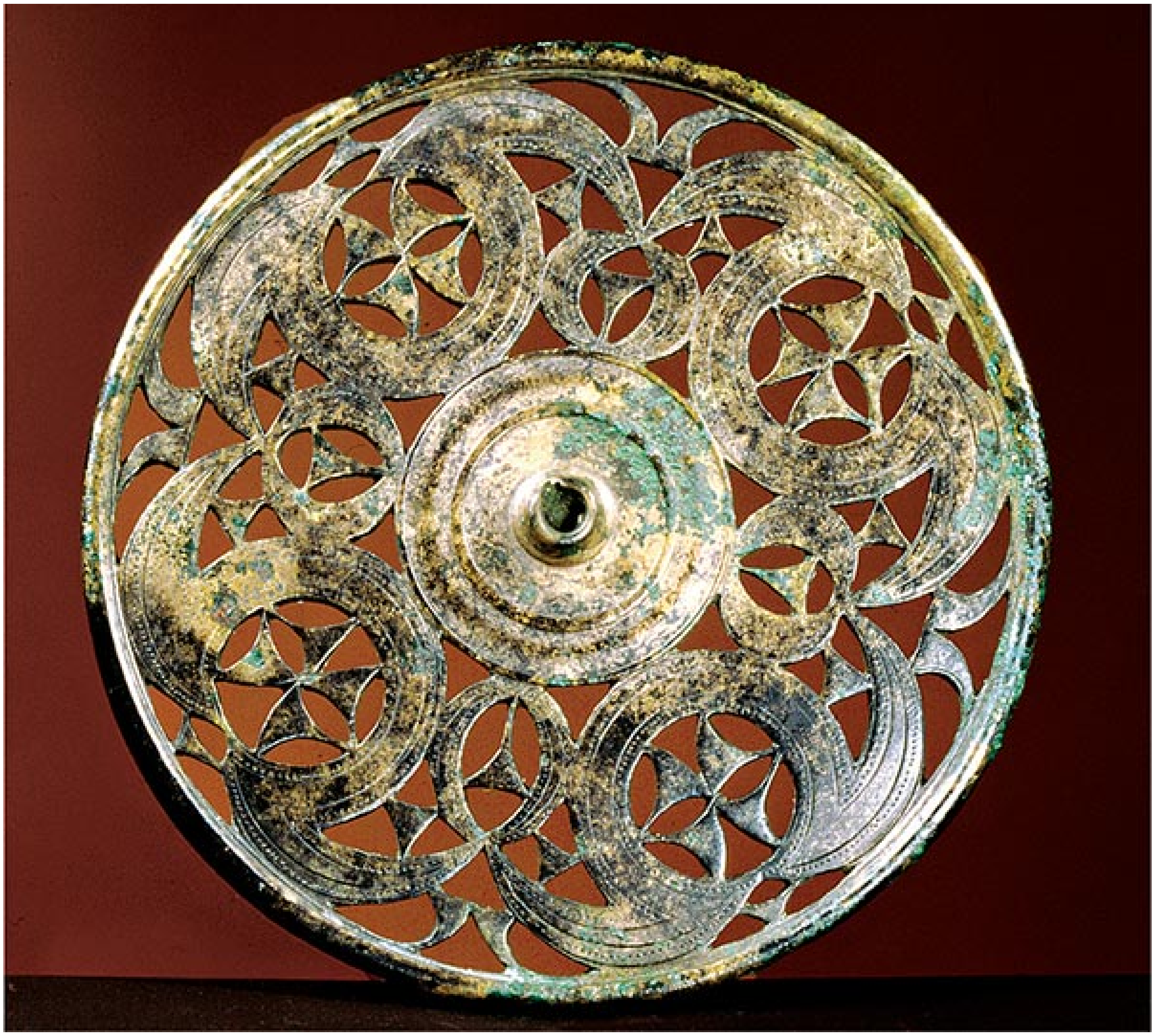
The men and women who were able to design and execute these timeless works of art were clearly far more than just craftworkers. They carried with them a deep knowledge of mythology. The symbols which they used and the combinations in which they used them were a form of communication. They were the repository and the guardians of ancient skills and beliefs and as such they would have been regarded with awe.



10.6 Human faces hidden in the decoration of two terret rings from northern France, now in the Musée d'archéologie nationale, Saint-Germain-en-Laye, Paris. The half-visible face has been referred to as 'the Cheshire Cat Style'. After drawings by Paul Jacobsthal.

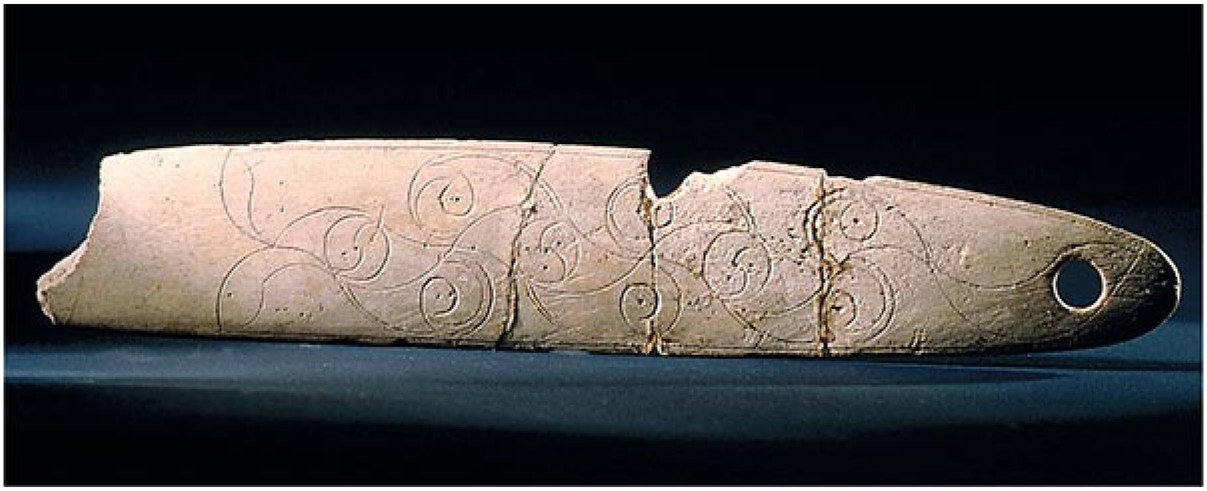
Materials and Methods

The skills of the metalworker in bronze and gold were already long established by the beginning of the Iron Age. They involved casting, sheet working, and other forms of hammer working. Casting was normally by the cire perdue (lost-wax) method, well exemplified in the collection of metalworking debris found in an early first-century BC context at the settlement at Gussage All Saints in southern England, where sets of horse harness and vehicle fittings were being manufactured. The first stage involved the modelling of the desired item in beeswax using small bone spatulae. When complete, the wax form was invested with a refractory clay leaving at least two vents, one surrounded by a funnel, or ‘gate’. Next the whole would have been warmed, to melt the wax so that it could be poured out for reuse, before the clay mould was baked. Once the mould was hardened, molten bronze could be poured through the gate to fill the interior void. When it had cooled, the mould would be broken open and the cast item removed for trimming, filing, and polishing. What is perhaps most noteworthy is the comparative simplicity of the process, given the skill of the craftsman. Wax was reusable, and bronze could be melted down from scrap in crucibles. The only materials consumed were charcoal for the fire and clay for the moulds. Using closed moulds in this way, or open moulds for more simple items, a wide range of artefacts could be produced.



10.7 Openwork bronze disc from the vehicle burial at Somme-Bionne, Marne, France. Late fifth century BC. The disc, which was part of a set of harness fittings, demonstrates the skills of the bronze-worker in setting out complex geometric designs. British Museum, London.

Sheet bronze working was in some ways a more skilled process. To begin with the sheet of appropriate size and thickness had to be created by beating out a metal billet, constantly annealing it to prevent the metal from becoming brittle. In the process the sheet might be moulded into vessel shape or kept flat. The most common form of decoration was by inscribing, chasing, or repoussé working. In the last two cases the sheet being worked would have had to be attached to a suitably pliable backing material. A necessary preliminary to decoration of whatever kind would have been the laying-out of the design with lightly scribed lines, often using compasses, sometimes involving highly elaborate constructions, as the intricate pattern on the openwork discs from the Marne vividly demonstrates. Bone trial pieces found at Lough Crew, Co. Meath, in Ireland show how craftsmen tried out designs in rough first. Other items such as brooches could be made by hammering out a billet, constantly annealing to retain malleability, drawing out, winding, flattening, and folding as required.

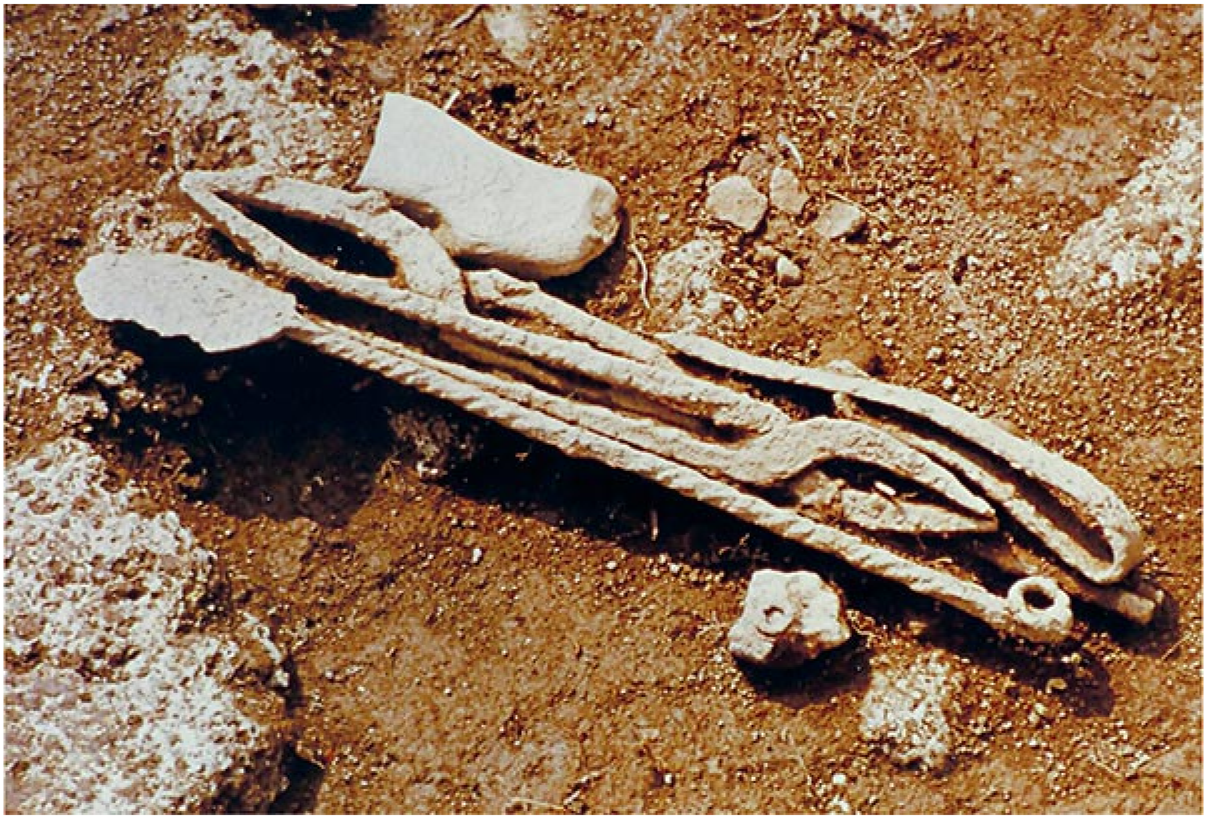


10.8 Bone trial pieces, possibly used by a craftsman to work out designs to be used on a metal object. Found in cairn H at Lough Crew, Co. Meath, Ireland. National Museum of Ireland, Dublin.

Finished items could be further enhanced by attaching or insetting other materials, of which coral and red glass were favoured throughout most of the period. These substances were either attached with small pins or fixed, cloisonné-style, in pre-made cells. In the later stages the art of enamelling was developed, allowing elaborate multicoloured finishes to be achieved which were particularly favoured for horse harness mounts. The skills of the bronze workers were also those used by goldsmiths and silversmiths.

Iron became of increasing importance after its first widespread introduction into barbarian Europe in the eighth century. Though occurring naturally over far more extensive areas and in far greater quantity than copper and tin, its extraction required a more complex technology and a higher temperature for the chemical changes to take place. Once the ore had been reduced, the spongy iron bloom had to be reheated and beaten many times to remove slag. Finally, when the iron was pure enough, a number of blooms would be beaten together to form an ingot of sufficient size to allow tools and weapons to be forged.

Large numbers of ingots are known, most of them dating to the later stages of the La Tène period (Map 23). A common form in central and western Europe is the -double pyramidal type, thick in the centre with the ends drawn out. In Britain the most common form is the sword-shaped bar, with the flanges of one end beaten round to create a hollow tube. These special forms were developed to demonstrate the quality of the iron, since if the metal had been too impure it would have been impossible to beat out ends or shape the tube without cracks appearing.



10.9 A selection of ironsmith’s tools from Nikolausberg, Austria, dating from the fourth or third century BC. Iron forging skills, developed during the La Tène period, have been little improved upon since. Museum Burg Golling, Salzburg.

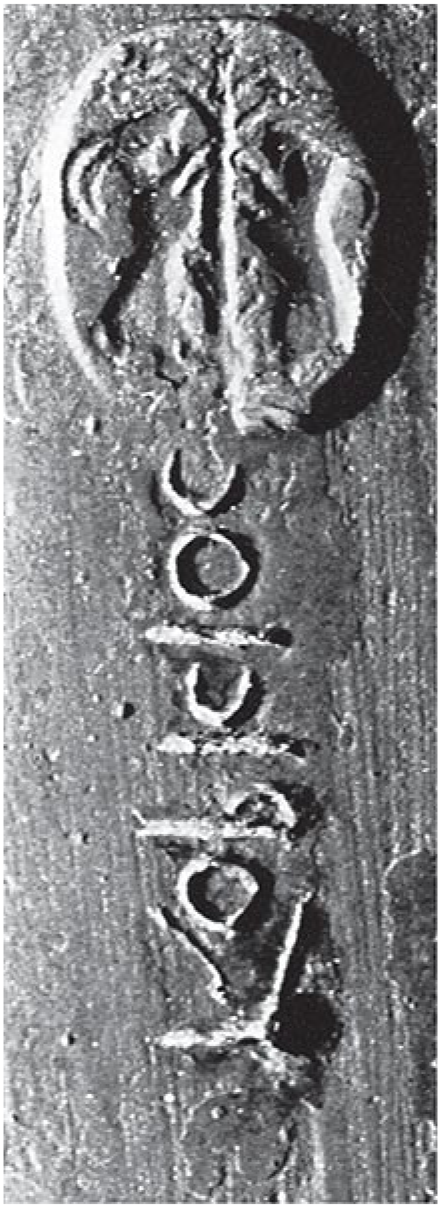
It is clear that ironsmiths had a detailed understanding of the qualities of their material and the appropriateness of different qualities to perform different functions. This is particularly apparent in the swords of the La Tène period. Metallurgical analysis has shown that for cutting blades different qualities of iron were used, layered to provide a high-quality cutting edge of steel which was usually well tempered. The boars' stamps on the sword from Port in Switzerland and the name Korisios with its attached stamp on a sword from the same site are probably examples of craftsmen's personal marks made as a guarantee of quality. There is no better example of the ironsmith's technical skills than the tunics of ring mail which occasionally come to light in graves, but for the smith as an artist the fire-dogs are pre-eminent.

In addition to the metalworker's products, one must not overlook those of the other people of skill: the glass workers, the wood carvers, the sculptors, the potters, and the woad painters (or tattooists). All created original works which in their different ways transmitted the rich images of Celtic artistic expression and symbolism.

The Origins of Aristocratic Art

The earliest examples of Celtic art appear in the fifth century, accompanying the elite burials of the Moselle and Marne. Inevitably, in the first faltering stages, it was the imported Mediterranean wine-drinking equipment which provided the model and the stylistic stimulus. The bronze beaked flagons from the burials of Kleinaspergle, Dürrnberg, and Basse-Yutz, all clearly based on Etruscan products, differ in form and in the treatment of the decorative detail to such a degree that they must all have been manufactured by local craftsmen working for aristocratic patrons. All three are sufficiently different in their interpretations to show that a variety of regional influences were already at work.

The grave from Kleinaspergle (found in a side chamber, the main grave having been robbed) provides an interesting range of items reflecting the development of Early Style art. The grave goods included an Italic cordoned bucket, an Etruscan stamnos, a locally made beaked flagon, two gold drinking horn terminals, a gold-repaired Attic cup, and a fitting probably for a belt. The drinking horn terminals were ornamented with rams' heads in a style that is reminiscent of 'eastern' animal art, while the flagon, even with its highly original interpretation of the human head at the base of the handle, is clearly of Etruscan inspiration. The gold patching on the Attic cup and the belt plaque incorporate plant motifs—palmettes, lotus-buds, and lotus-blossom—which, though original in their transformation, are in a grammar learnt from the Greek world. In this one burial then, dating to the middle of the fifth century, we can see the first stages in the use of disparate inspirations from the classical Mediterranean world and the east being brought together and moulded into something new.

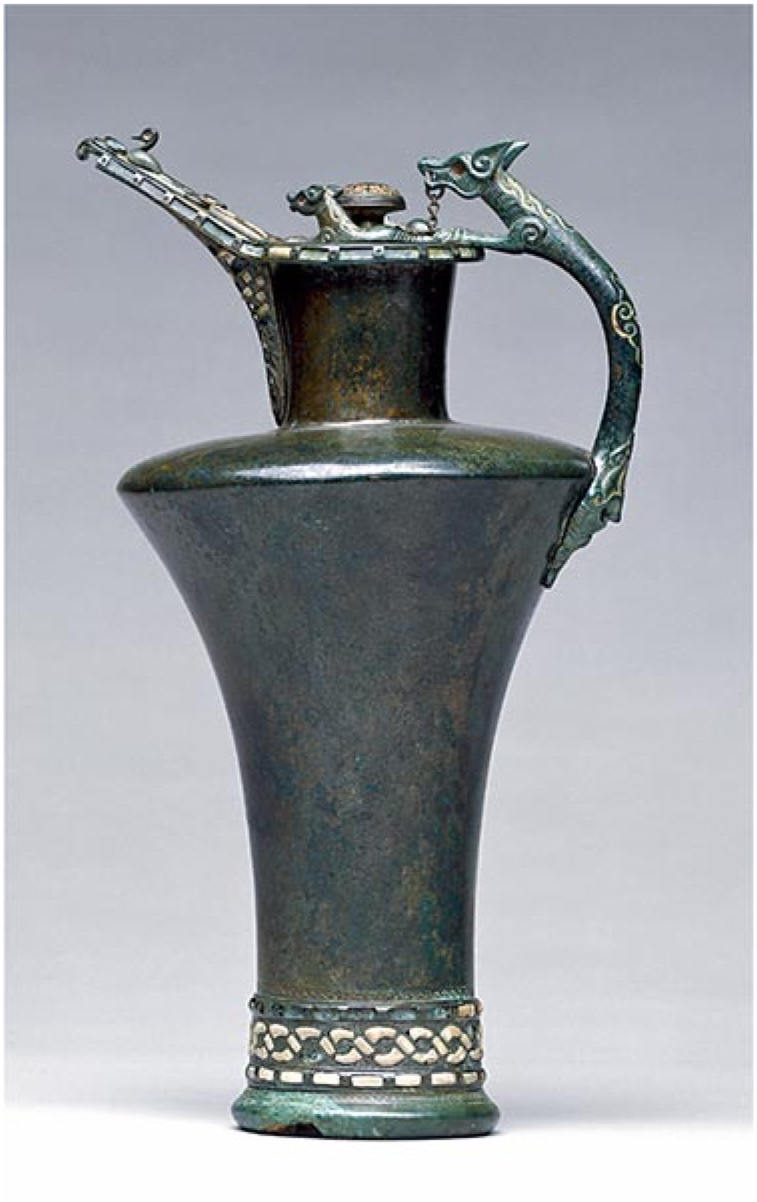


10.10 Detail of a stamp on an iron sword blade found at Port, Berne, Switzerland. Below the stamp is the inscribed name KORISIOS. Whether the marks indicate the maker, owner, or have some other meaning is unclear. First century BC. Bernisches Historisches Museum, Berne.

The Basse-Yutz flagons (a pair, possibly from a single grave) were accompanied by two Etruscan stamnoi and probably date to the second half of the fifth century. The general concept of the flagons is evidently Etruscan, but the sharp high shoulder and concave sides are very unclassical. Its Hallstatt ancestry is proclaimed by a band of coral interlace set around the base and a small duck riding on the spout. Less certainty attaches to the inspiration for the animals shown on the rim and handle of the flagon, but the dashed pellets and spiral joints point to an eastern ancestry.

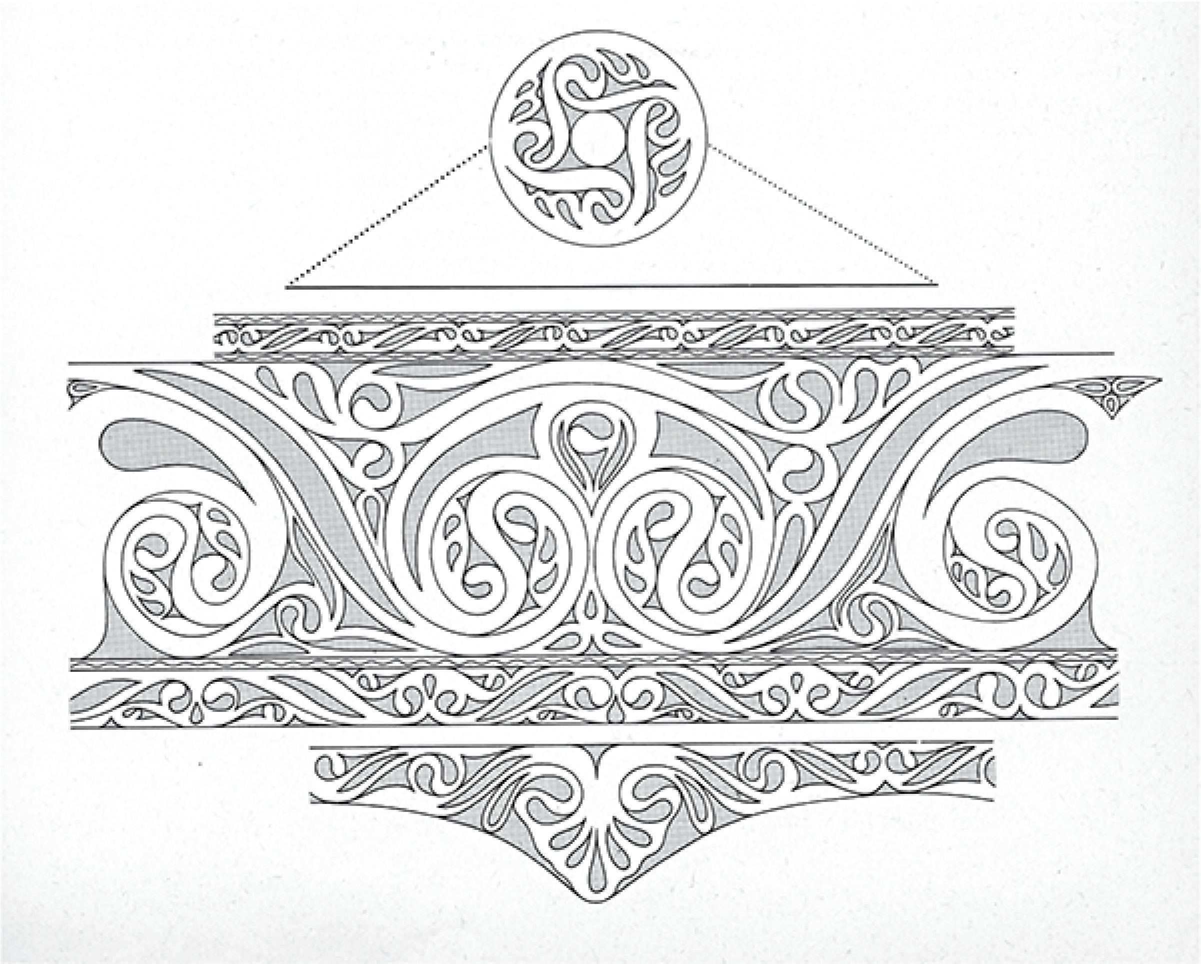
The Dürrnberg flagon shares the high-shouldered shape of the Basse-Yutz vessels but is otherwise altogether different. The handle attachment embodies a stylized head, with bulbous nose, lentoid eyes, and swept-back hair, characteristics that were to recur many times in Celtic art, framed by vegetal renderings which have evolved from the classical palmette. The beast on the handle appears to hold a severed head in its mouth, while further around the rim a curious quadruped lurks. Once again we might see in the creatures some inspiration from the east.

Taken together, these fifth-century flagons provide a glimpse of an art style in the making—Etruscan vessel forms are mutating and already Greek palmettes and lotuses are disintegrating into more loosely structured plant forms. Echoes from the Hallstatt past are still dimly to be discerned; a new distinctive animal ménage is beginning to insinuate itself and the iconography of the disembodied head is now appearing from the shadows.



10.11 One of a pair of wine flagons from a burial(?) at Basse-Yutz, Moselle, France. They are examples of the early native craftsmanship of the early fourth century BC, reflecting the initial stages in using Etruscan forms and decorative motifs, together with ideas from the east and from the traditional repertoire, to create something distinctively original. The vessels are inlaid with red enamel and coral. British Museum, London.

The Marne region at this time, while sharing in the general development, evolves characteristics of its own, most notably an emphasis on plant motifs and a preference for openwork ornaments. Both are evident on the openwork mounts for the chariot pole or yoke from the burial at La Bouvandeau. Geometric compass-work designs also develop, while a different tradition of highly accomplished engraving incorporating classical palmettes can be recognized on a few elite items such as the pointed helmet from Berru in the Marne and the Etruscan beaked flagon, enhanced by a Celtic engraver, now in the museum at Besançon.

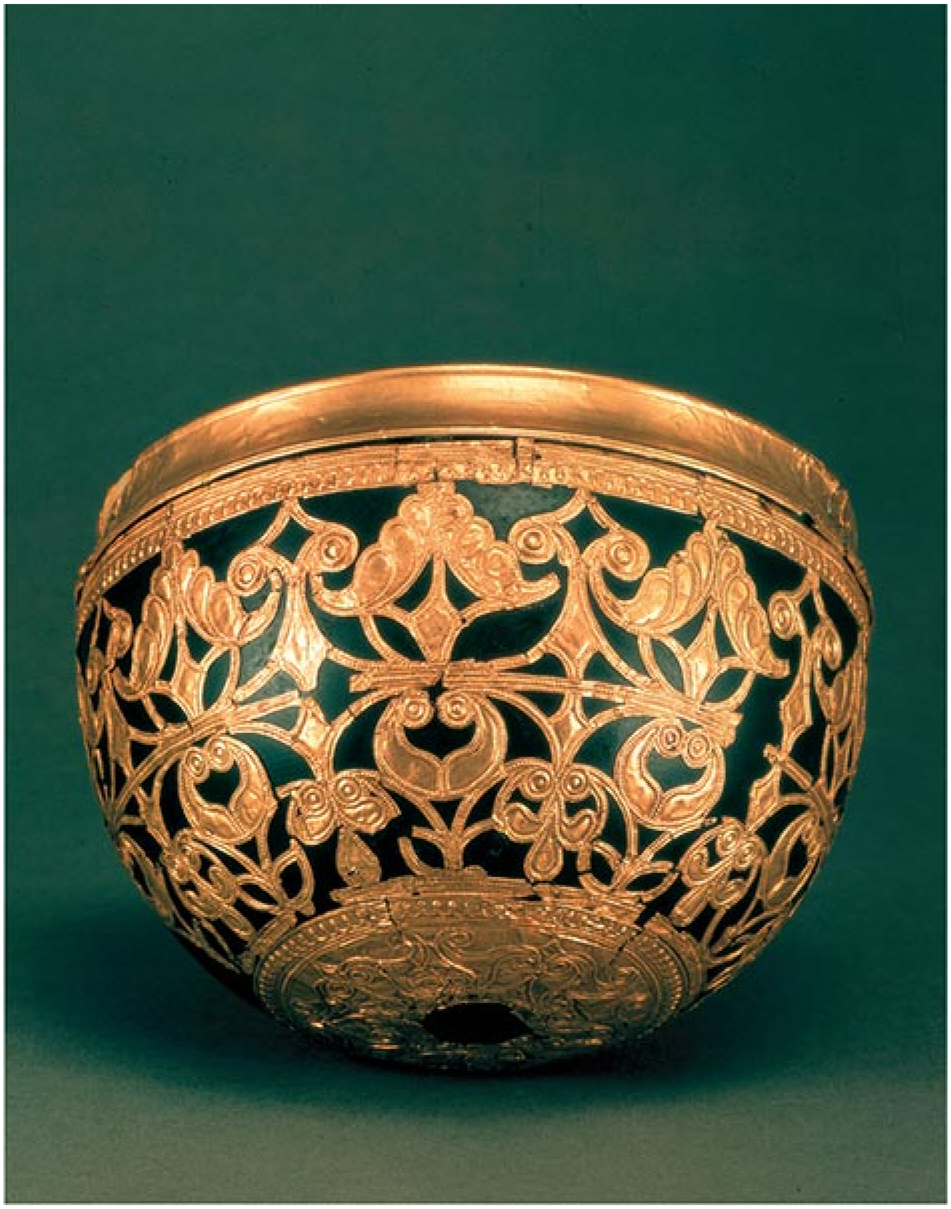


10.12 A diagrammatic representation of the decoration on a flagon from an unknown location but probably north-eastern France. The flagon is Etruscan in form but the decoration is Celtic. Early fourth century BC. Musée des beaux-arts et d'archéologie de Besançon, France.

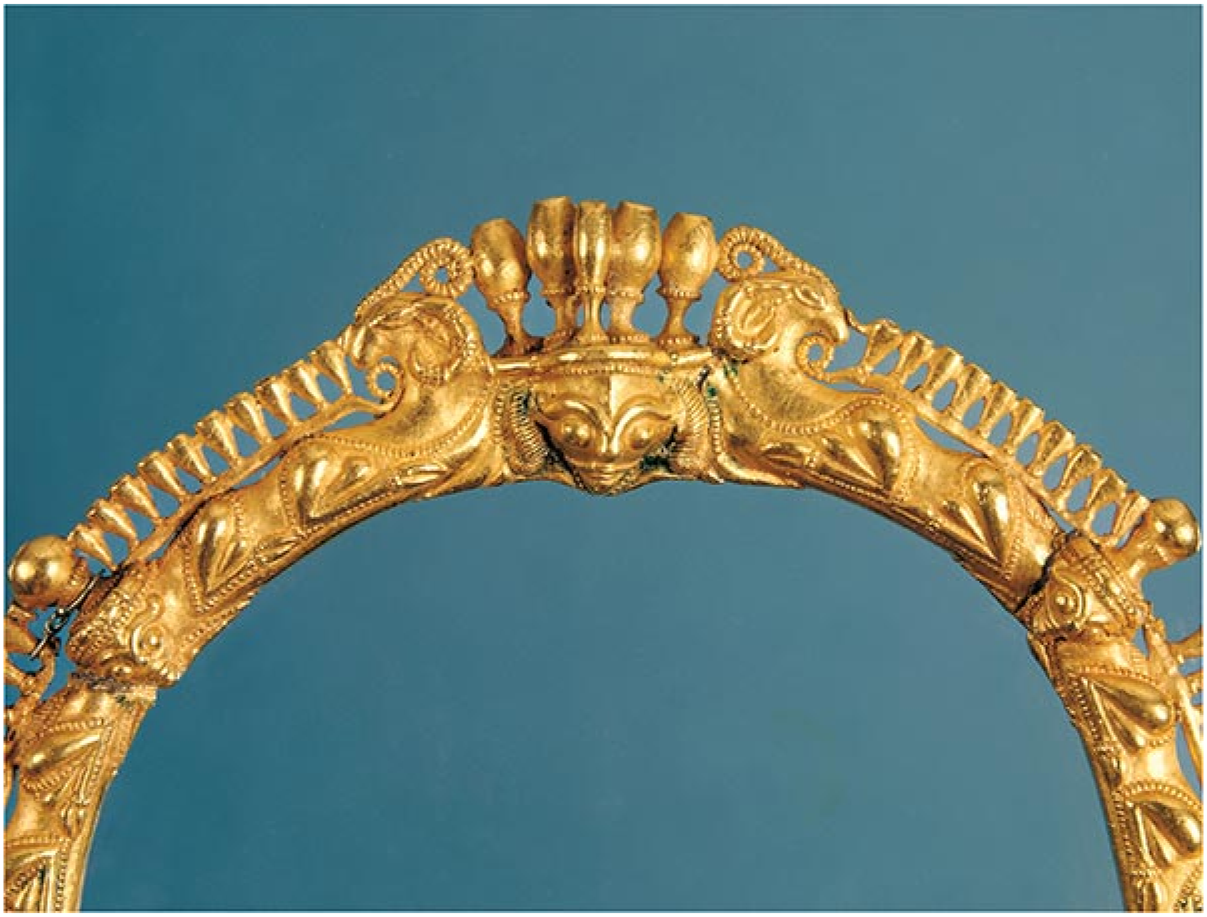
In the Moselle region the high point of artistic achievement in the fifth century was attained by the goldsmiths, whose masterpieces included the openwork gold covering of a hemispherical wooden bowl, found in barrow I at Schwarzenbach in Saarland, with its two registers and a basal disc decorated with transformed palmettes, lotus motifs, and triskeles. A similar piece, possibly once ornamenting a drinking horn, from Eigenbilzen in the Belgian Limburg, is closely related in style and craftsmanship and could be taken for the work of a Moselle ‘master’. Schwarzenbach has also produced four gold plaques displaying clean-shaven human faces framed by a ‘comma-shaped’ headdress similar to the depiction of the head on the handle of the Kleinaspergle flagon. Closely related items of gold-sheet decoration have been found further east at Dürrnberg and at the warrior grave of Chlum in Bohemia.

The pre-eminence of the Middle Rhenish goldsmiths is further demonstrated by a brilliant array of neck and arm rings which combine the plant motifs of the gold-sheet workers with superbly modelled fabulous and semi-fabulous beasts and human heads. One of the most spectacular of their products is the arm ring from Rodenbach found with an Etruscan flagon and basin and an Attic kantharos. The arm ring has a central moustached face, closely similar to that on the handle attachment of the Basse-Yutz flagon, flanked on either side by pairs of recumbent cervids looking over their backs to another human head behind them. The style of the beasts, with their legs folded up beneath them and their turned-back heads, vividly recalls Scythian gold-work of the sixth and fifth centuries found as far west as Hungary.

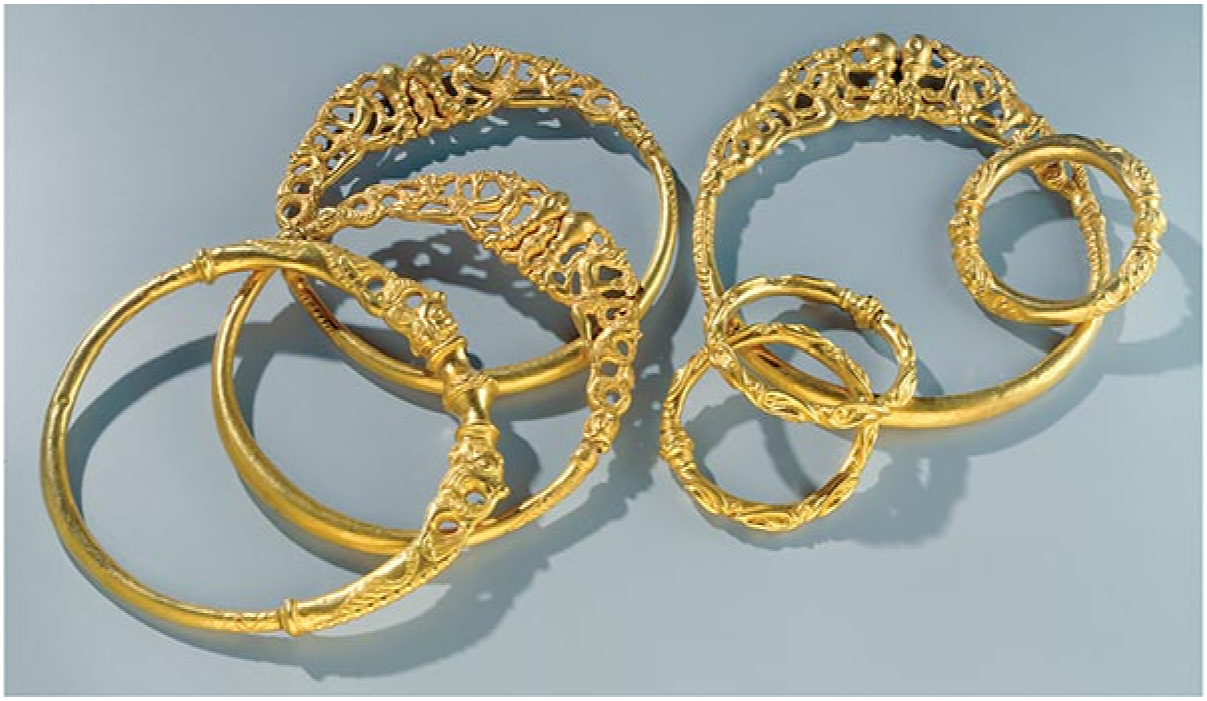
The Rodenbach arm ring is not alone. Related pieces have been found in female graves at Besseringen and Reinheim and in a hoard of seven gold rings from Erstfeld in Switzerland, all seven evidently the product of a single workshop. The iconography of the Erstfeld rings is complex in the extreme, with a variety of humanoid, animal, and bird figures bound interminably in apparent conflict. That it had a meaning we cannot doubt, but how to interpret the contorted scenes is beyond recovery.



10.13 (Opposite top) A cup from the princely burial at Schwarzenbach, Rhineland, Germany. The vessel is enlivened by an external application of openwork embossed gold leaf characteristic of the Early Style of Celtic art which closely copies Etruscan designs. Second half of fifth century BC. Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Antikensammlung.



10.14 (Opposite bottom) Gold arm ring from the princely grave of Rodenbach, Kaiserslautern, Germany. The decoration is characteristic of Early Style and incorporates squatting, backward-looking cervids similar in style to Scythian animal art. The disembodied heads are common in Celtic art of this period. Historisches Museum der Pfalz, Speyer.



10.15 (Above) Gold neck rings from a hoard found at Erstfeld, Uri, Switzerland, dating to the late fifth or early fourth century BC. The complex interweaving of the figures and motifs is a theme running throughout Celtic art. Landesmuseum, Zurich.

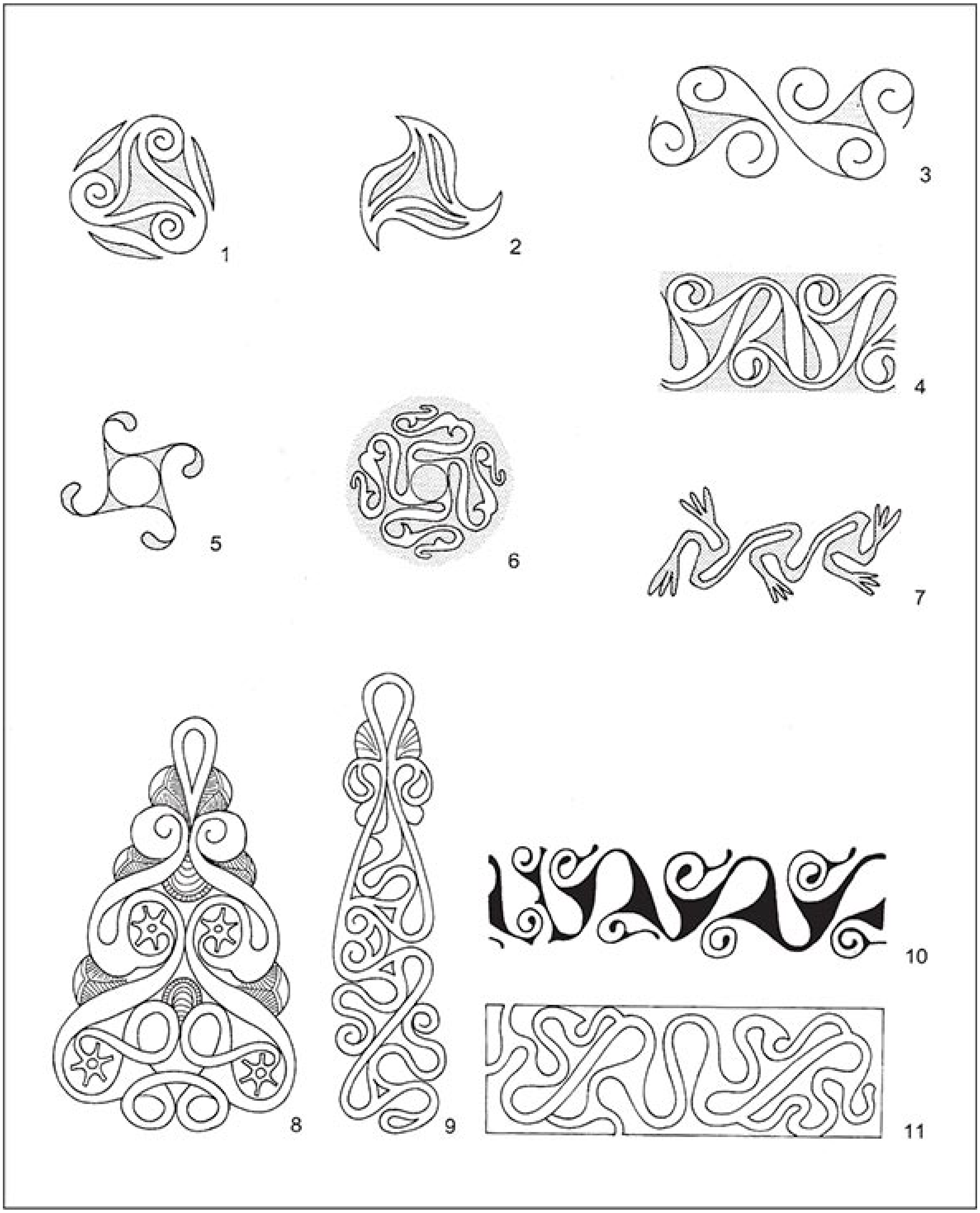
Together the items of elite art, created by master craftsmen in the Marne–Moselle region in the fifth century, represent the first innovative steps in the development of a Celtic art style. Though they display an evident variety, there is a sufficient degree of cohesion for art historians to use such portmanteau phrases as Early Style or Early Strict Style to contain the full repertoire. The influence of the Graeco-Etruscan world is still easily discernible. The origin of the animal art is less apparent. Some commentators have emphasized that fabulous animals were very much a part of the Etruscan repertoire and argue that there is little need at this stage to suppose there to have been a strong eastern component. But certain characteristics of the depiction—the spiral joints and folded-up limbs—are redolent of Scythian art and were surely learned from eastern European neighbours.

Celtic Art in the Fourth Century: Influences from the Po Valley

The development of Celtic art styles in the fourth century BC has been variously characterized. Earlier attempts used the rich 'princess's' grave from Waldalgesheim, near Bonn, as a type assemblage against which to compare fourth-century products, and some observers have gone so far as to propose a 'Waldalgesheim master'. Others have been content with a less constricting terminology, referring to the development as an Early Free Style. However, the more descriptive phrase Vegetal Style best captures the distinctive characteristics of the pieces since the overriding motif is the running tendril or linked band of lyre palmettes. Animals and human heads recede into the background. They do not entirely disappear but rather lurk in the vegetation, from which, disguised, they occasionally peer.

The centre of innovation is no longer the Rhine–Moselle region but the Marne, Switzerland, Hungary, and the Po valley, and it is the relationship of the last with the broad northern zone that raises interesting questions. It is now widely believed that the Celtic groups in the Cisalpine region, notably the Boii and the Senones, were responsible for integrating Graeco-Italic ideas with Celtic ones and transmitting the result back to the innovating centres north of the Alps. This interpretation would imply that close social links were maintained between the Celts who had emigrated to the south and those who remained in their northern homelands.

One artefact type which well exemplifies this is the jockey-cap helmet with a neck-brim, hinged side pieces, and central plume attachment. Helmets of this kind were usually made of iron, with an internal soft fabric lining and an exterior decoration of bronze or gold panels ornamented in repoussé. Three have come from northern Italy, from Monte Bibele, Gottolengo, and an imprecisely located example from Umbria, and another was found in an elaborate grave at Canosa di Puglia in Apulia. All four, which were evidently made in northern Italy, display the Vegetal Style of decoration, which is at its most luxuriant on the Canosa example. The lower register shows, alternately, reversed palmettes linked in a continuous band with fleshy S-shaped leaves, while in the upper register half palmettes alternate with lyre palmettes. The style is closely similar to that displayed on a disc from Auvers-sur-Oise in the Marne, and on the flagon at Besançon, as well as the painted pot from Prunay, Marne, implying a close relationship between the craftsmen of the Po valley and Marne in the fourth century.

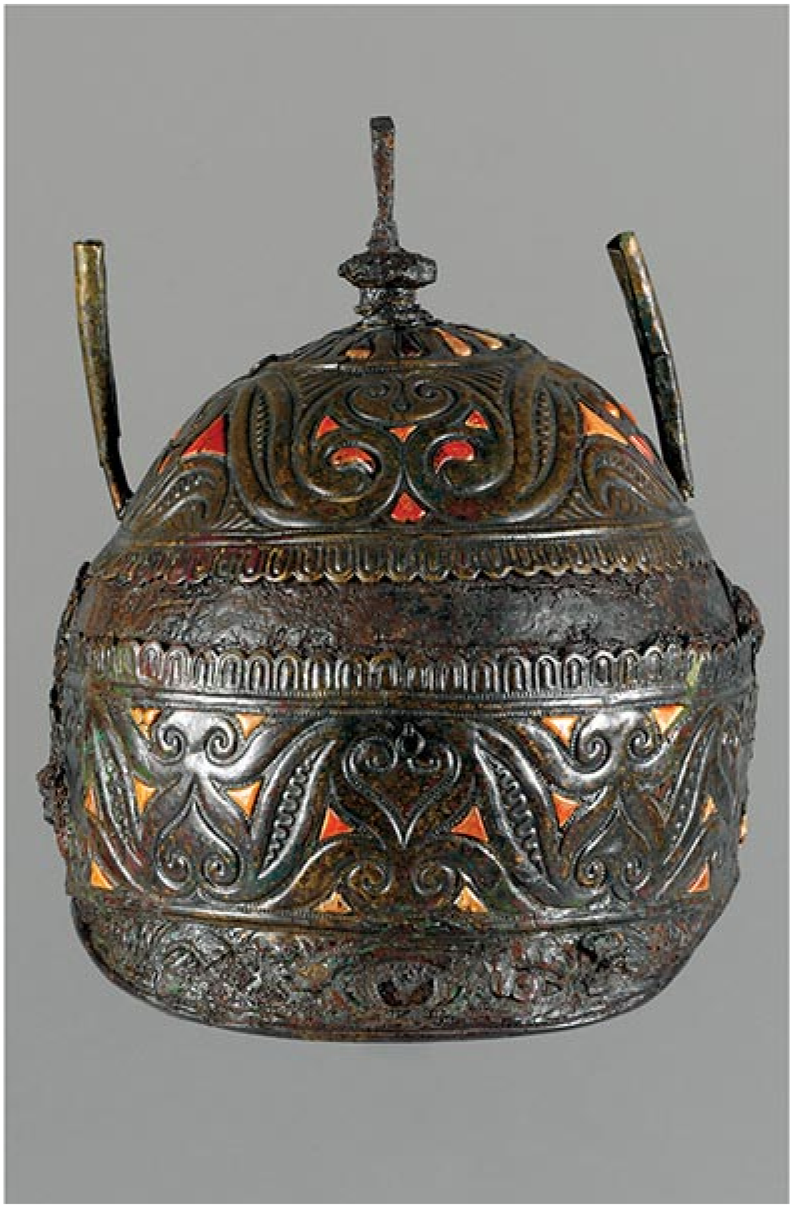


10.16 Designs from various La Tène artefacts.

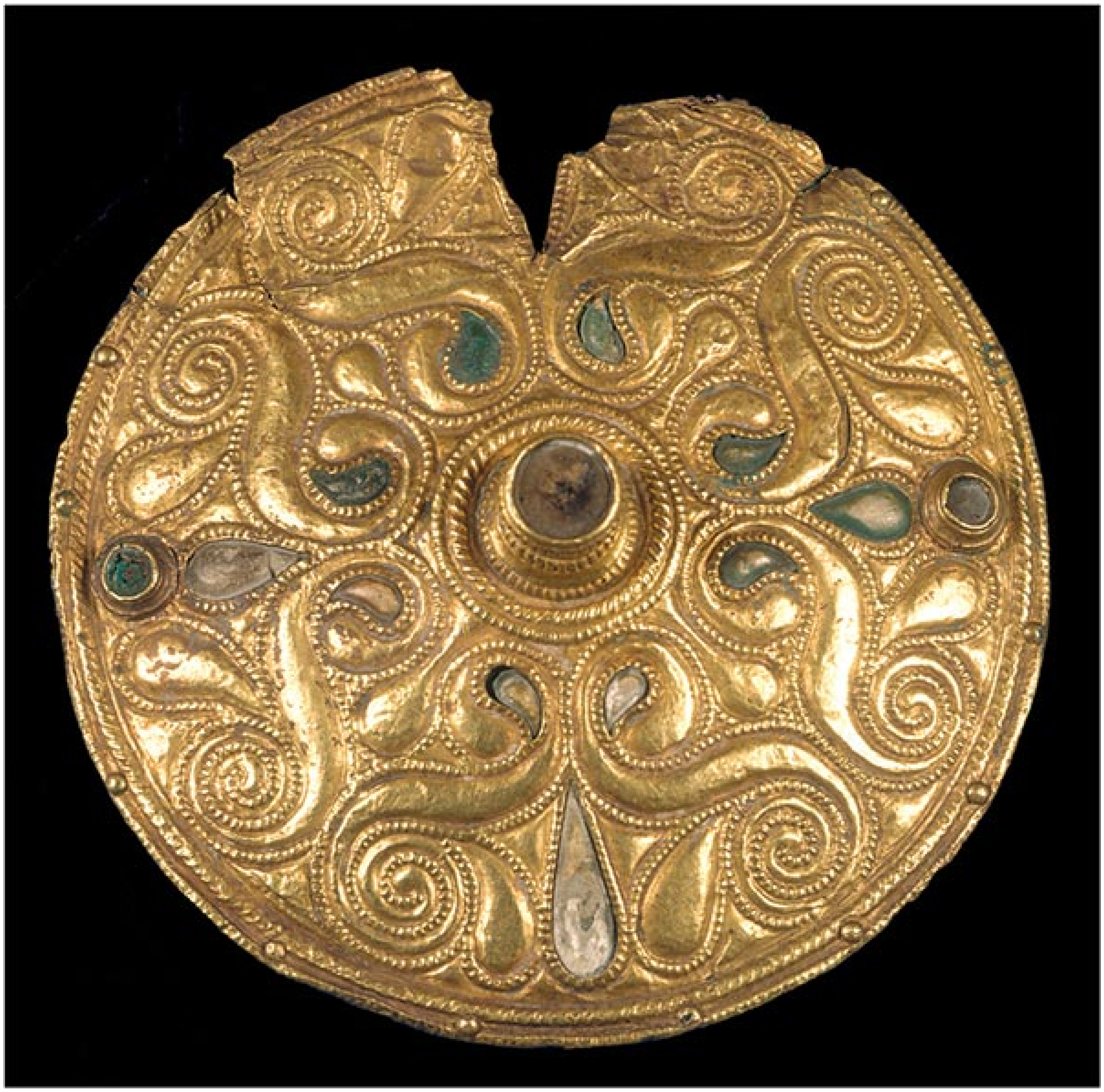
Nos. 1–7, Early Style, all La Tène I. 1 Bronze disc, Écury-sur-Coole, Marne; 2 Bronze bowl, Saulces-Champenoises, Ardennes; 3 Helmet, Amfreville-sous-les-Monts, Eure; 4 Pot, Prunay, Marne; 5 Bronze flagon in Besançon Museum; 6 Bronze strainer in Morel Collection, British Museum, London; 7 Bronze brooch from Prosnes, Marne.

Nos. 8–11, Vegetal Style. 8 Flagon, Waldalgesheim, Mainz-Bingen; 9 Torc, Jonchery-sur-Suippe, Marne; 10 Pot, Saulces-Champenoises, Ardennes; 11 Bucket, Waldalgesheim, Mainz-Bingen.

Two jockey-cap helmets of very similar kind have been found in France, one from Agris near Angoulême and another from the Seine at Amfreville-sous-les-Monts, the latter being made of bronze, while the former, of iron covered with gold, could, technically, be a north Italian product.



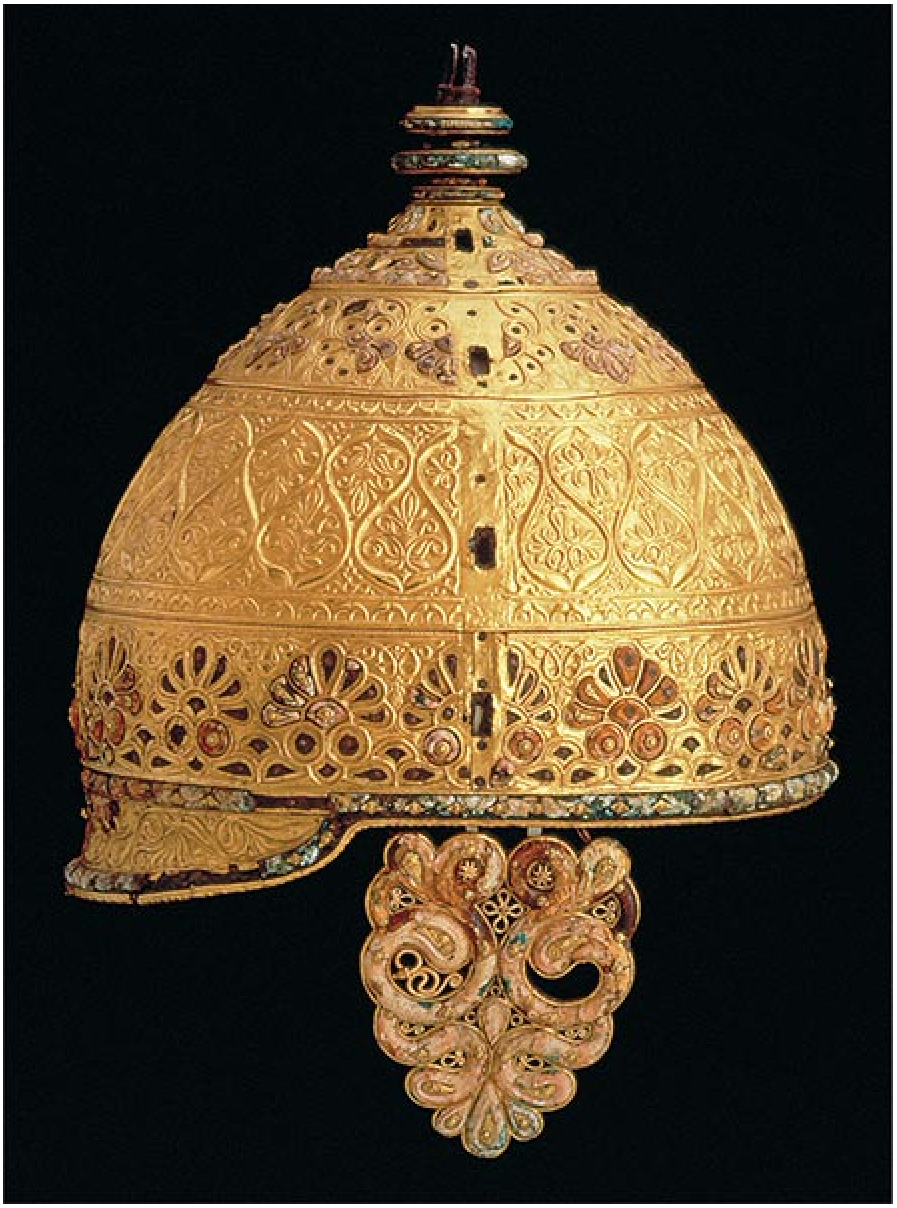
10.17 (Opposite top) Helmet made in iron partially cased in repoussé-decorated bronze inlaid with coral. From Canosa di Puglia, Bari, Italy. The decoration is typical of Celtic art of the Vegetal Style. Second half of fourth century BC. Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Antikensammlung.



10.18 (Opposite bottom) Bronze disc covered in gold sheet decorated in repoussé and inlaid with coral. From Auvers-sur-Oise, Val d'Oise, France. Early fourth century BC. The decoration is characteristic of the Vegetal Style of northern France. Cabinet des Médailles, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris.

Another item which serves to link the Celtic communities north and south of the Alps is the buffer-headed gold torc. An example found in the cemetery of Filottrano in the Italian territory of the Senones, decorated with a central palmette combined with twinned foliage, is of a type found widely in temperate Europe, with examples coming from Bohemia, Austria, the Rhineland (Waldalgesheim), and probably the Marne region.

Within this closely related series the Filottrano torc is seen to be an early example, showing the initial stages in combining Greek and Celtic motifs. The suggestion that the style developed and spread north from Italy is further supported by scabbard decoration found at Filottrano and Moscano di Fabriano, which is considered to be the origin of a type displayed on several scabbards in northern France and on one from Bohemia. Taken together, the evidence is strongly suggestive that artistic developments among the Italian Celts were readily transmitted northwards to enhance the work of the craftsmen who served the Transalpine Celtic elite and in whose schools many regional variations began to develop. The vast spread of territory over which the Vegetal Style is found is a reflection of a social mobility exacerbated by the warrior movements of the time.



10.19 (Above) Helmet made of iron and bronze covered with gold and inset with coral from Agris, Charente, France. Fourth century BC. The decoration is characteristic of the Vegetal Style. Musée de la Société archéologique et historique de la Charente, Angoulême.

Developments in the Third and Second Centuries

For much of the third and early second centuries BC the society of Celtic Europe was characterized by small communities whose menfolk equipped themselves as warriors and may well have spent time away from the home base engaged in raiding expeditions. There was, therefore, a high degree of mobility in both the geographical and the social sense: some archaeologists have even gone so far as to characterize this as a period of democratization. In such a context it was the swords of the warriors and the ornaments of their women that were to carry forward the development of the metalworker's art. The large numbers of decorated sword scabbards that survive allow distinct schools or styles to be proposed, though inevitably art-historical classifications are at best broad oversimplifications.

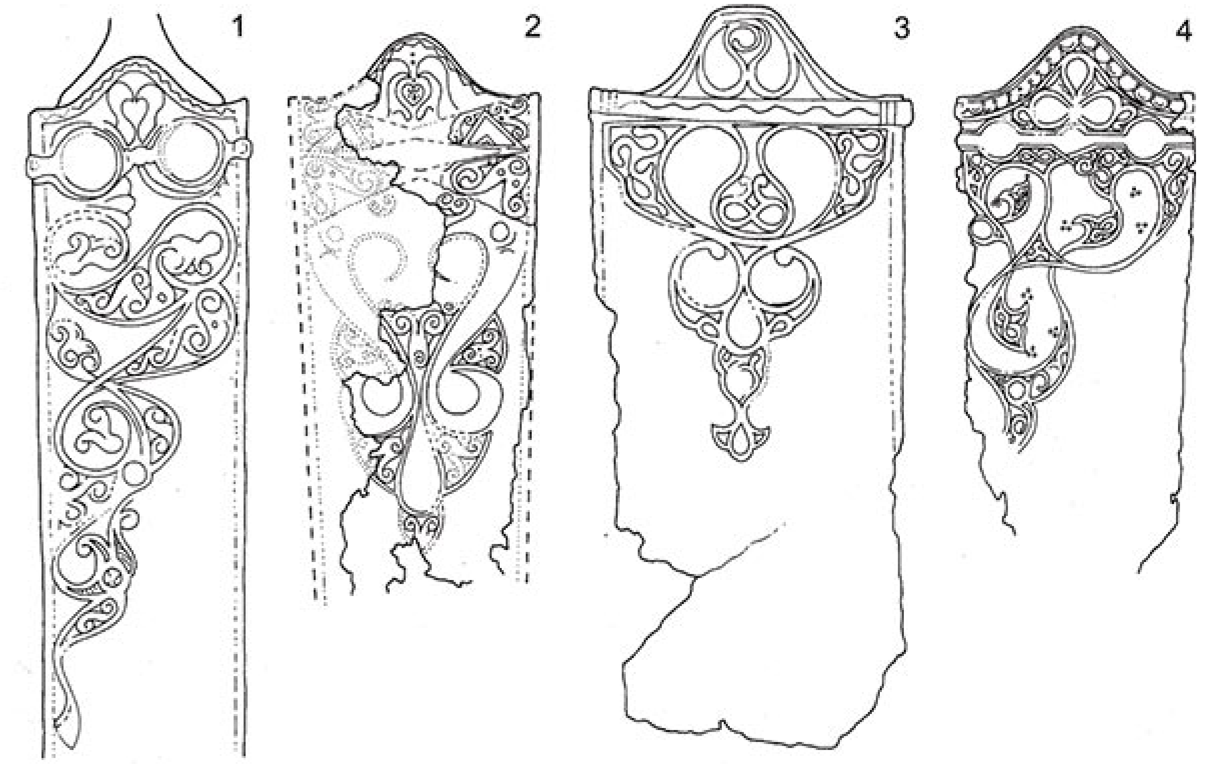
One of the most distinctive series of swords is found concentrated around Lake Balaton in Transdanubia and is accordingly referred to as the Hungarian Sword Style. Of the various motifs used, 'dragon-pairs' are the most distinctive. The two facing S-shaped dragons are really a variant of the simple lyre motif. Dragon-pair swords, though concentrating in Hungary, are very widely distributed, reaching as far afield as England, Spain, Romania, and Italy. By the second century the rigid bisymmetric motifs merge, giving way to more asymmetric designs, which flow across and down the scabbard.

Another school of swordsmiths was at work at the same time in Switzerland. One of the favoured motifs here is that of birds' heads which grow out of triskele or lyre motifs. The Swiss compositions are more symmetrical and restrained than the Hungarian.

The Hungarian and Swiss Sword Styles are little more than the archaeologically recognizable manifestations of a specific form of craft production which spread across Europe and, over two centuries or so, will have been practised and developed by a multitude of craftsmen, their individual creations being carried far and wide by their warrior patrons to be admired and sometimes emulated in distant lands.

The sword styles and related pieces are sometimes referred to as the Free Graphic Style, to distinguish it from its more three-dimensional manifestation, the Free Plastic Style. Plastic decoration is the method appropriate to the ornamentation of neck, arm, and ankle rings and for decorative fittings attached to vehicles or bronze vessels.

Knobbed anklets, hinged for ease of fitting, are especially distinctive, the knobs providing hemispherical surfaces often decorated in three dimensions with triskeles terminating in buttons or studs. The same plastic concepts were put to good use to create the human, animal, and grotesque heads which brighten up the yokes and linchpins of chariots or stare from the rims or handle attachments of vessels such as the cauldron found in the Danish bog at Brå with its fearsome guardian bird. Free Plastic art, particularly that which incorporates animal forms, is very different from that of the decorated sword scabbards. It uses the methods of casting and also the ethos of the earlier styles of the fifth and fourth centuries but even so it has moved a long way from its origins.

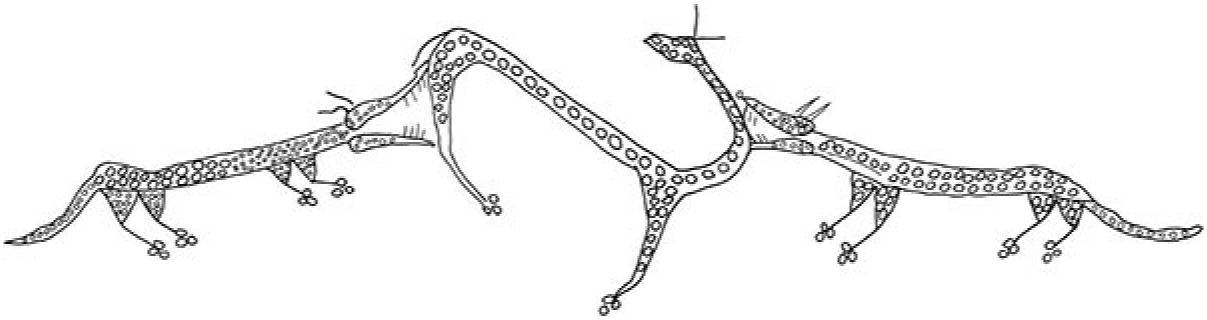


10.20 Examples of the Hungarian Sword Style of scabbard decoration. Swords (left to right) from: Batina, Croatia; Sremska Mitrovica(?), Serbia; and Bölcske-Madocsahegy, Hungary (both right-hand examples). Various scales.

These cast pieces and the graphic decoration on sword scabbards and spears are far more than just ornament to amuse. They were all deeply symbolic, denoting status, lineage, and power, warning off adversaries and providing protection. The sword, the chariot, the cauldron, and the human body were redolent with visual messages which the Celts themselves would have well understood.

The Impact of Scythians and Thracians

During the sixth and fifth centuries Transdanubia developed a strong eastern, horse-focused culture which may have been, in part at least, the result of new peoples moving in from the region of the Pontic steppe (above, pp. 100–1). To free it from preconceptions which might be implied by ethnic names such as Scythians or Sigynnae, it is usually referred to as the Vekerzug culture, after a type site in Hungary containing distinctive horse burials. The maintenance of strong cultural links with the Pontic steppe region produced, on the eastern borders of the Early La Tène cultural province, a rich source of steppe iconography, and from the fourth century, when Celtic groups extended eastwards, there was much mingling of populations. In such a situation one might expect eastern Celtic culture to have absorbed some elements from the indigenous culture.



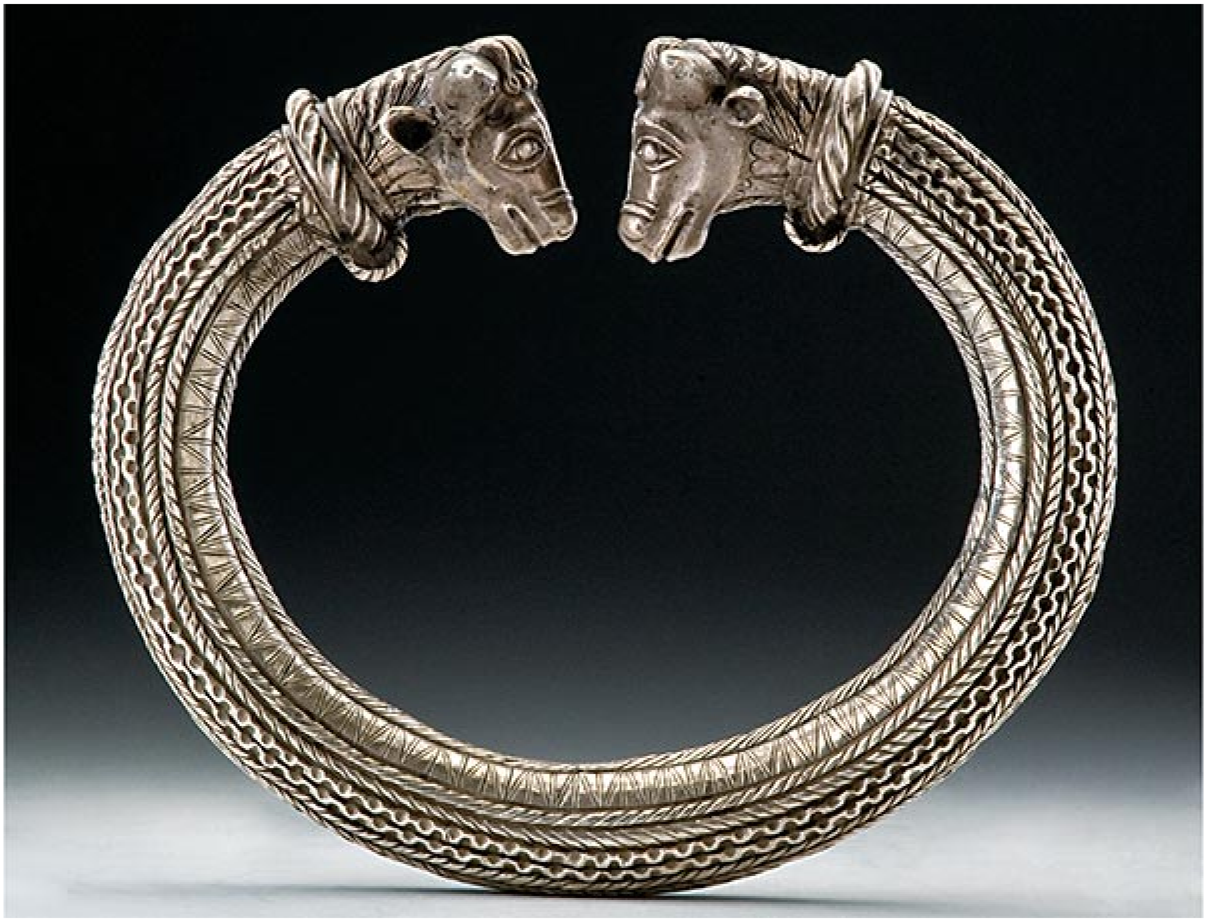
10.21 Scene of struggling animals in a Scythian style inscribed on a pottery vessel from Lábatlan, Hungary. Magyar Nemzeti Múzeum, Budapest.

If one excludes the dragon-pairs on the swords, assuming them to have developed from the Etruscan lyre motif, there is remarkably little metalwork that can be regarded as showing steppe characteristics, with the exception of a bronze drinking horn terminal from Jászberény-Cserőhalom which ends in an open-mouthed dragon wearing a torc. Hungarian pottery, on the other hand, embodies many reflections of its complex cultural ancestry. Most dramatic is a pottery vessel from Lábatlan, inscribed on the neck with a scene in which a cervid is being attacked and brought to the ground by two fierce quadrupeds, presumably wolves. The composition is redolent of the struggling animal theme so prevalent in steppe art.

Much of the Lower Danube valley down to the Black Sea and the territories on either side was occupied by tribes collectively referred to as

Thracians. From the fifth century onwards the Thracian tribes developed a characteristic art style of their own based on an amalgam of Greek, Scythian, and eastern, ultimately Persian, ideas. For the most part it was an aristocratic art designed to provide prestige vessels for the feast and armour for parade. The juxtaposition of Celtic and Thracian tribes in the Middle Danube provided opportunities for contact between the two cultures, varying from trade and the exchange of gifts to the acquisition of booty by raiding.

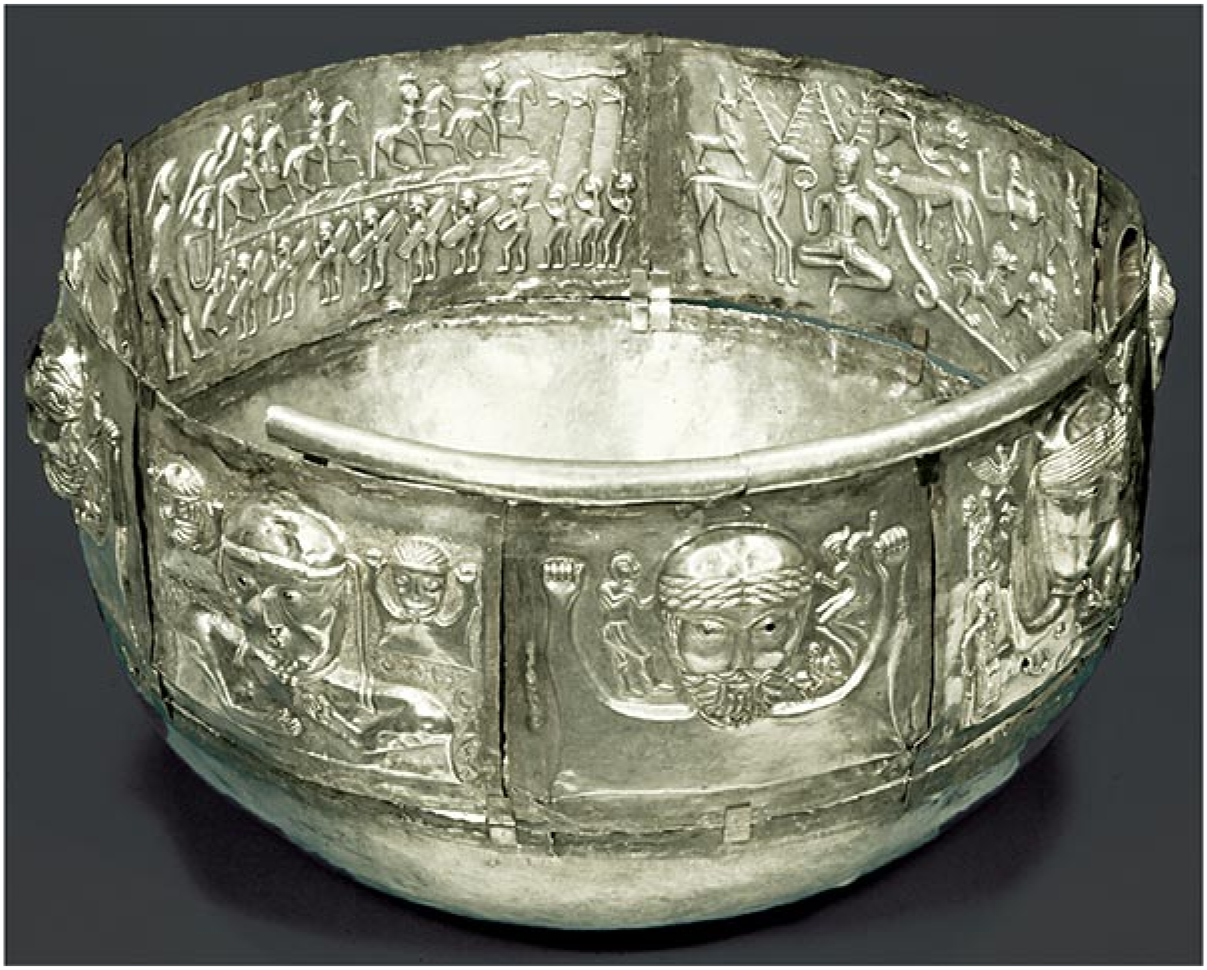
Several items found in western La Tène contexts may be thought to show Thracian influence. The ram-headed drinking horns from Schwarzenbach have already been mentioned. Drinking horns and ram-headed terminals were prevalent in Thracian culture, and another drinking horn from Weiskirchen, on the Saar, decorated in gold stamped with sphinxes, may have been made in a Black Sea workshop. Their appearance in the Rhine–Moselle area could have been the result of a diplomatic gift between the nobility of the two regions. The Rodenbach arm ring, with its pairs of rams looking over their shoulders, though possibly of local manufacture, would have been comfortably familiar to a Thracian or Scythian.



10.22 Scene of struggling animals in a Scythian style inscribed on a pottery vessel from Lábatlan, Hungary.Magyar Nemzeti Múzeum, Budapest.

From the early third century, when the Celtic Scordisci became firmly established in the Middle Danube as direct neighbours of the Thracian Triballoi, regular diplomatic relations must have become the norm. Surprisingly little has yet been found to give substance to these exchanges, but two items must be considered. The first is a silver-plated iron torc of massive proportions found at Trichtingen in south-western Germany. The high technical quality of the silver plating might suggest an eastern craftsman, while the iconography, incorporating two facing bulls' heads as terminals, is evidently Thracian. There can be little doubt that the torc was made somewhere along the Lower Danube. By what process it reached southern Germany is impossible to say but its massive size and the fact that both beasts are depicted wearing torcs, a sign of sovereignty, suggest that it could have been a diplomatic gift symbolizing a treaty of friendship between two equal elites.

The second item is the justly famous Gundestrup cauldron recovered from a bog in Jutland. While the cauldron form and certain pictorial details, in particular the depiction of warrior infantry and cavalry, are decidedly Celtic, much of the iconography and the use of silver and of gilding are Thracian. The most reasonable explanation for this remarkable piece is that it was made by Thracian craftsmen thoroughly conversant with the Celtic world. While it could have been a gift, of great value, from the king of the Triballoi to his equal among the Scordisci, a more attractive hypothesis is that it was made and used as a symbol of lasting friendship, and perhaps even joint rule, between the two ethnically different polities.



10.23 The Gundestrup cauldron found dismantled in a bog near Rævemosen, Aars, Denmark. Although some of the figures appear to represent individuals wearing Celtic armour and the deities wear torcs in the manner of Celtic gods, much of the detail derives from Thracian art, and the use of silver, of which the cauldron plates are made, is common in the Thracian world but rare among the Celts. It is probable that the cauldron was made in the Middle Danube region in the second or first century BC and passed through various hands until it eventually ended up in the Danish bog. Nationalmuseet, Copenhagen.

The fact that the cauldron was eventually deposited in a Danish bog and the Trichtingen torc ended up in Germany is an interesting comment on the mobility of valuable items in the Celtic world. To this same list we may add an animal-ornamented silver gilt disc from Helden in Holland which is stylistically and technically Thracian, and the remarkable collection of metalwork including phalerae and greaves recovered (but subsequently lost again) in the eighteenth century, on the tiny island of Sark in the Channel Islands. Judging from contemporary illustrations, the collection is likely to have come ultimately from the Lower Danube region. The Helden and Sark finds were probably buried in the late first century BC, but this says little of their date of manufacture or of their biographies before their final deposition.

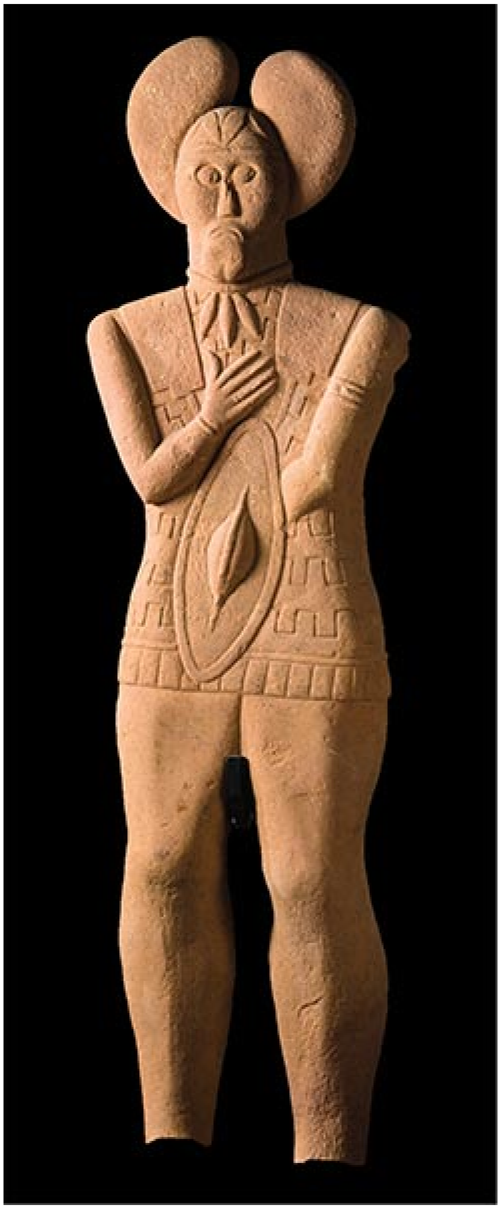
What survives in the archaeological record presently available is only a fraction of the works of high artistic merit which must have been circulating throughout Europe. Since they were essentially items designed for display, the visual inspiration available to the inventive craftsman must have been immense.

The Art of the Sculptor

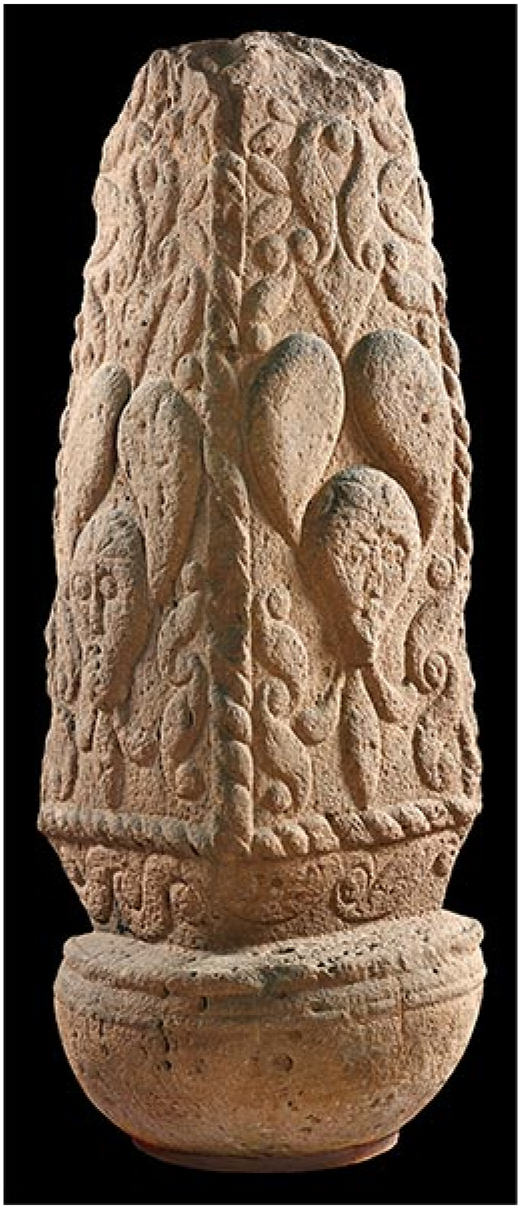
The art of the sculptor is art in the service of the gods. Here we will consider the range and style of the work rather than its religious context, which is the theme for the next chapter. Although a number of notable stone sculptures have been recovered, mainly from western Europe, in reviewing them we should bear in mind that they probably represent only a pale reflection of the sculptor's output, much of which is likely to have been in wood and therefore less prone to survive.

The earliest piece so far to come to light is a unique, roughly life-size carving in the round of a warrior, found lying at the edge of a barrow at Hirschlanden (p. 123) near Hohenasperg. If, as seems highly likely, the statue once topped the barrow and was contemporary with it, then it must date to the late sixth century. The figure is shown as naked except for a two-thonged belt holding a short dagger of Late Hallstatt type, a neck ring, and a conical hat very similar to that made in birch bark and worn by the Hochdorf chieftain in death. The figure is carved from local sandstone but in a style highly reminiscent of contemporary carvings from the Abruzzi region and from Nesazio Pola in Istria, suggesting that the inspiration, and perhaps even the sculptor, came from the Etruscan south, whence, at this time, the elite of the Middle Rhine were receiving many cultural influences.

A group of sculptures from southern Germany dating to the fifth or fourth century is more obviously of native work, embodying as it does a religious iconography that is also reflected in broadly contemporary art of the metalworker. The most striking of the pieces is a life-size figure, carved in red sandstone, which guarded the burial of a warrior chieftain at Glauberg. He is armed, carries a shield, and wears an elaborate headdress—referred to as a leaf crown—reflecting his elevated status. That the statue was intended to represent an actual person is strongly suggested by the fact that the body buried in the grave was wearing gold jewellery closely similar to items shown on the statue. Here was a Celtic warrior in all his glory carefully depicted by a local sculptor. Another clearly local piece is a four-sided pillar from Pfalzfeld. Each of the sides, framed by cabling, bears a stylized human head carved in high relief. The heads wear the so-called leaf crowns and they appear to be sprouting three-pointed beards. Between the heads and the frames the space is filled with running scrolls and lyre patterns composed of S-shaped motifs.



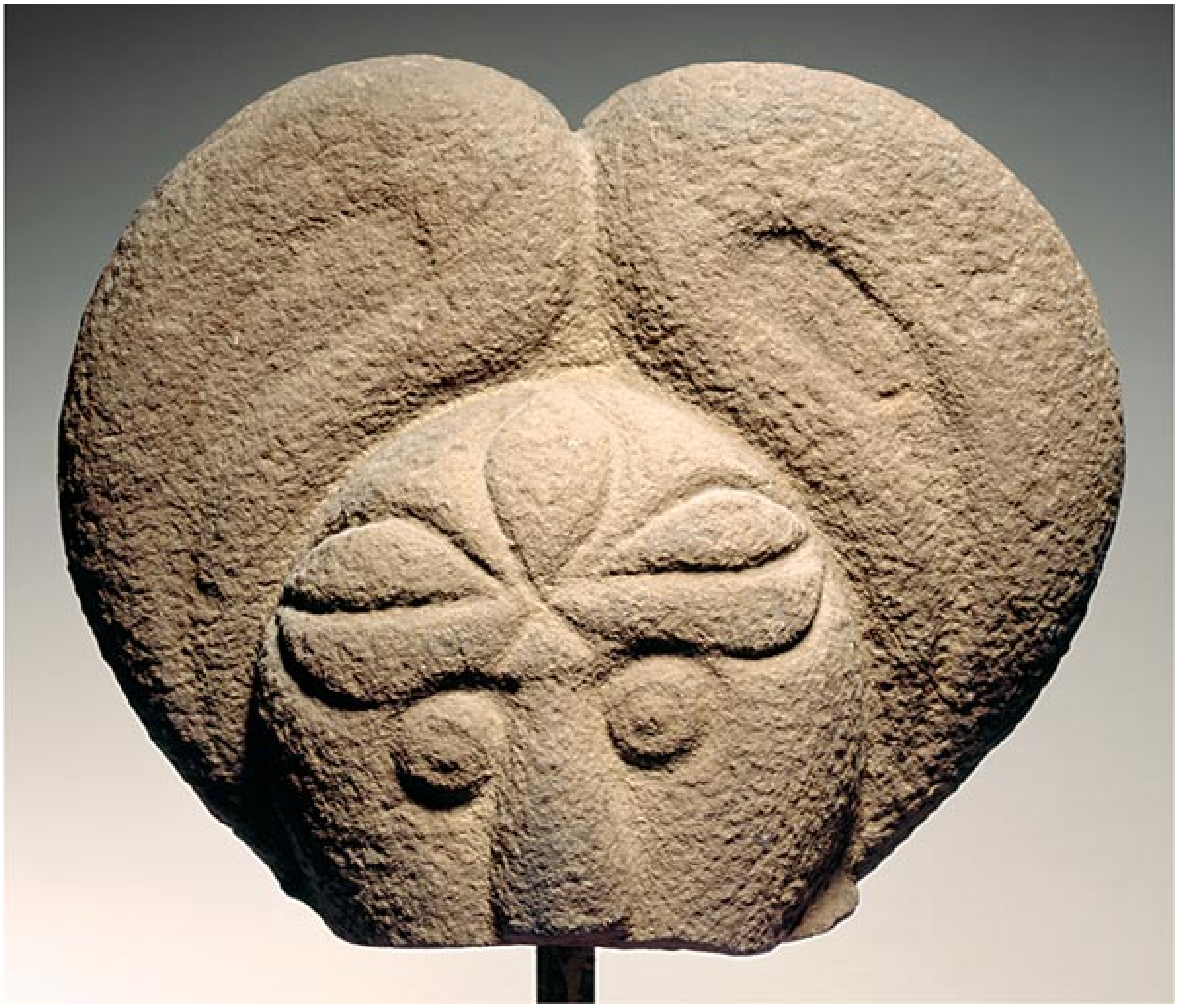
10.24 (Opposite left) Life-size figure carved from red sandstone found close to a burial at Glauberg, Hesse, Germany, dating to 450–400 BC. The figure wears a leaf crown and carries a small (symbolic?) shield. The body buried in the tomb was wearing a gold neck ornament similar to that shown on the statue. Keltenwelt am Glauberg, Hesse, Germany.



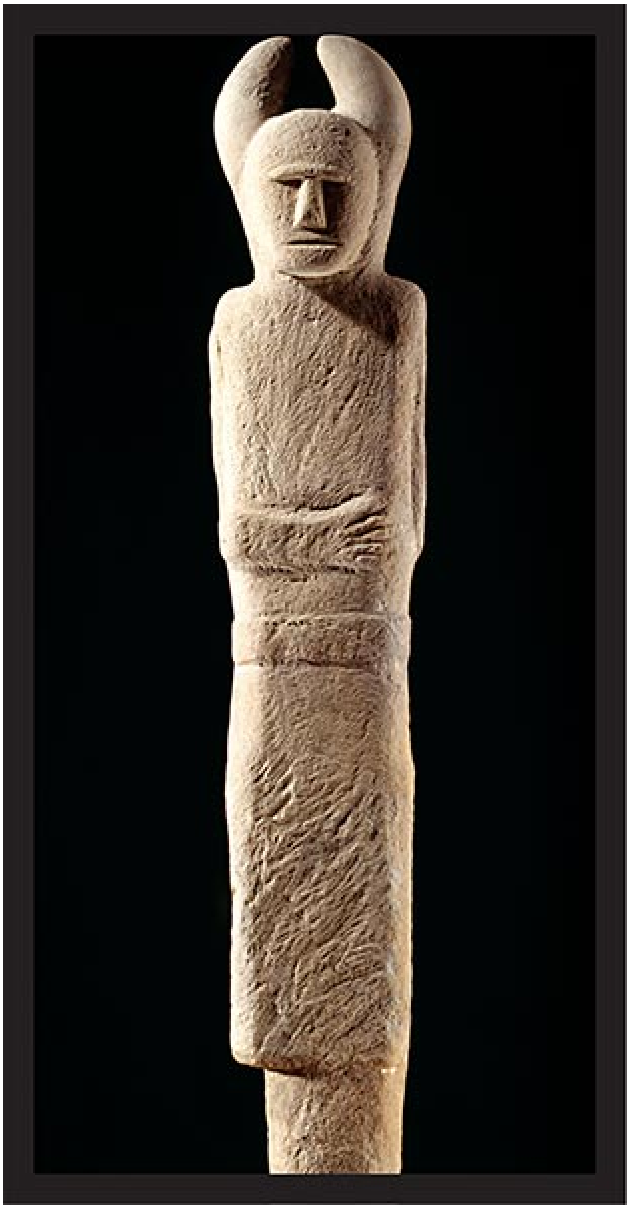
10.25 (Opposite right) Carved stone pillar from Pfalzfeld, St Goar, Germany. Each side bears a head with a leaf crown and triple-pointed beard. Fifth or fourth century BC. Rheinisches Landesmuseum, Bonn.

The leaf crowns are a feature shared with two other items from the region, a fragmentary stone head from Heidelberg and a stone pillar figure from Holzgerlingen. The Heidelberg head is a dramatic piece with piercing circular eyes and a furrowed brow, which enhance the ferocity of his stare, characteristics which he shares with the Glauberg warrior. The Holzgerlingen pillar statue, carved on two opposite faces with similar images, is altogether simpler, with the facial features, and right arm folded across the stomach, heavily schematized. None the less, standing originally some 2.5 metres, it would have presented a terrifying vision. Another pillar sculpture, from Waldenbach, not far from Holzgerlingen, is rather different in style. Only the base now survives, but the curvilinear pattern with which it is decorated in low relief is characteristic of the fourth or third century. Little remains of the figure which comprised the upper part of the pillar except for a well-sculpted arm and hand. Together the southern German group of sculptures suggests a long-lived and varied tradition.

A second group of religious sculptures comes from Provence and helps to characterize the Celto-Ligurian culture of the region—a long-established culture overlain and modified by influences from the nearby Greek colonies and also from the Celtic world. A recurring theme is the cult of the severed head. This is most dramatically represented by a pillar carved with a series of heads, presumably from a sanctuary, which was found reused as a door sill in the oppidum of Entremont, near Aix-en-Provence. Another cult image from the same site depicts a pile of four severed heads. Not far away, at Roquepertuse, an array of religious sculptures has been recovered, including columns with niches for severed human heads, and a lintel carved with a frieze of horse heads upon which probably once stood a dramatic stone carving of a bird of prey (p. 295). Another notable find was a pair of stylized Janus-heads sharing a single leaf crown. Both Entremont and Roquepertuse also produced elegant renderings of life-size human figures seated cross-legged. In the trabeated architecture of the Roquepertuse sanctuary and the seated figures we are clearly seeing the influence of the Greek world, but the severed heads and Janus-like deities provide a firm link with Celtic symbolism.

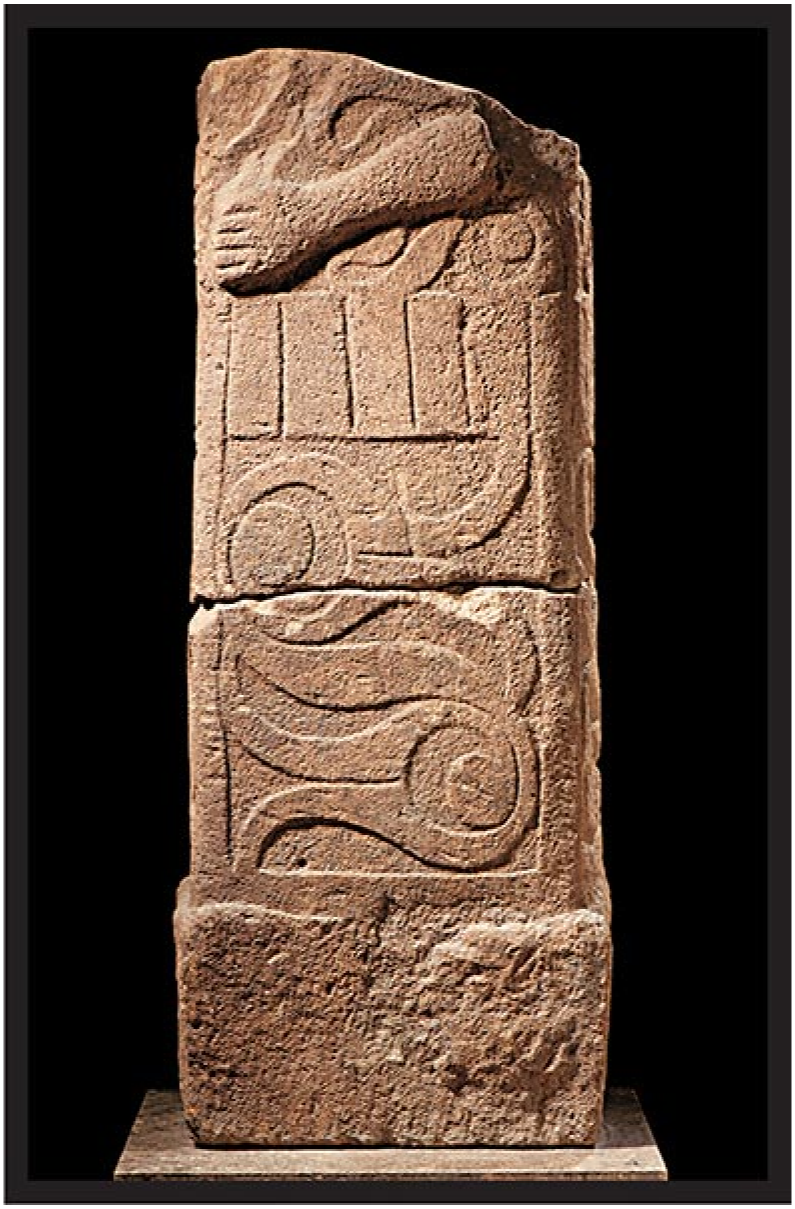


10.26 (Above) Stone head of a deity from Heidelberg, Baden-Württemberg, Germany, wearing a leaf crown. Late fifth or early fourth century BC. Badisches Landesmuseum, Karlsruhe.



10.27 (Left) Statue of a god from Holzgerlingen, Böblingen, Germany. The figure, Janus-like, faces two ways. The heads once shared a leaf crown which has since broken and been restored. Sixth or fifth century BC. Landesmuseum Württemberg, Stuttgart.

An even more fearsome image was found at Noves in the Lower Rhône valley. The Tarasque of Noves, as it is called, is a squatting beast clasping severed, bearded heads in its forepaws while devouring a body of which only the arm protrudes from its jaws. A somewhat similar rendering, from Linsdorf in Alsace, is an indication that the imagery had a wide geographic spread.



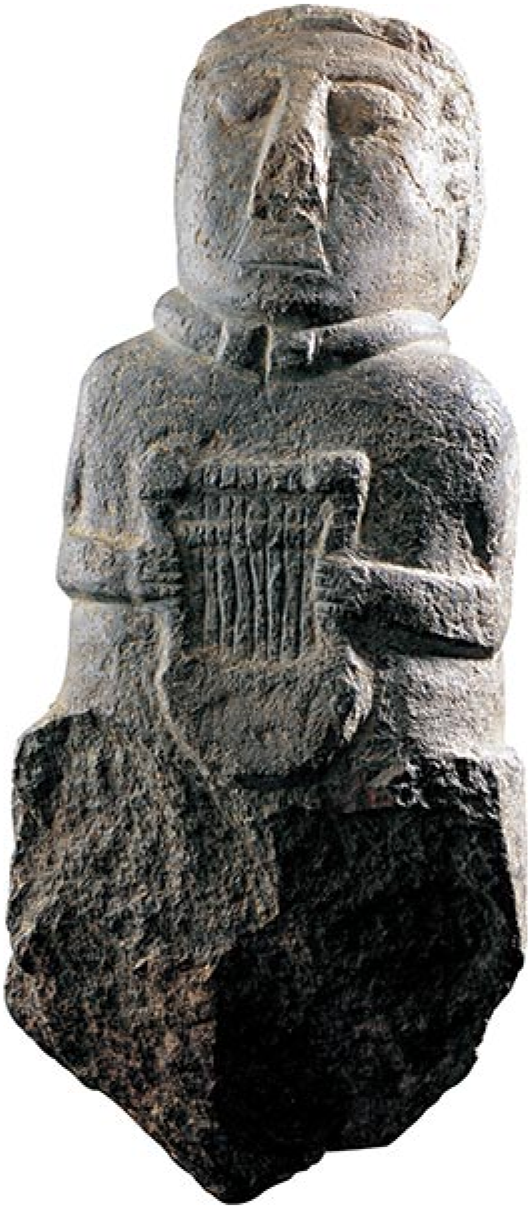
10.28 (Opposite) Carved pillar from Waldenbuch, Böblingen, Germany. The figure at the top is missing except for an arm. Fourth or third century BC. Landesmuseum Württemberg, Stuttgart.

In addition to these two highly distinctive regional groupings of sculpture, a number of individual items have been found more widely scattered. A small stone figure from Euffigneix (p. 241) in the Marne evidently depicts a deity wearing a torc, and is identified by a vigorous rendering of a boar against his body. Another god figure, again wearing a torc, but this time holding a lyre, was discovered at Paule in western Brittany. It is probably also in this same category of deities that we should place the famous head from the religious site of Mšecké Žehrovice in

Bohemia. He, too, wears a torc, but is considerably larger in scale than the two French figurines. These few surviving isolated examples are a reminder of both the diversity and the extent of Celtic sculpture. Similar icons and their wooden counterparts must have pervaded all parts of the Celtic sphere.

Ceramic Art

Many Celtic communities favoured decorated pottery, often using motifs common to those of the metalworker. An example of this is the widespread distribution of pottery with stamped decoration (Map 24) which was produced in several centres from the fifth to the third centuries in a broad zone from the Moselle to Transdanubia but extending as scattered outliers even further. The high technical quality of this ware and the standardized range of motifs and motif arrangements suggest a shared set of cultural values and perhaps a degree of centralization in production. Outliers of the generalized style in western Brittany raise interesting questions about the nature of contact at this time.

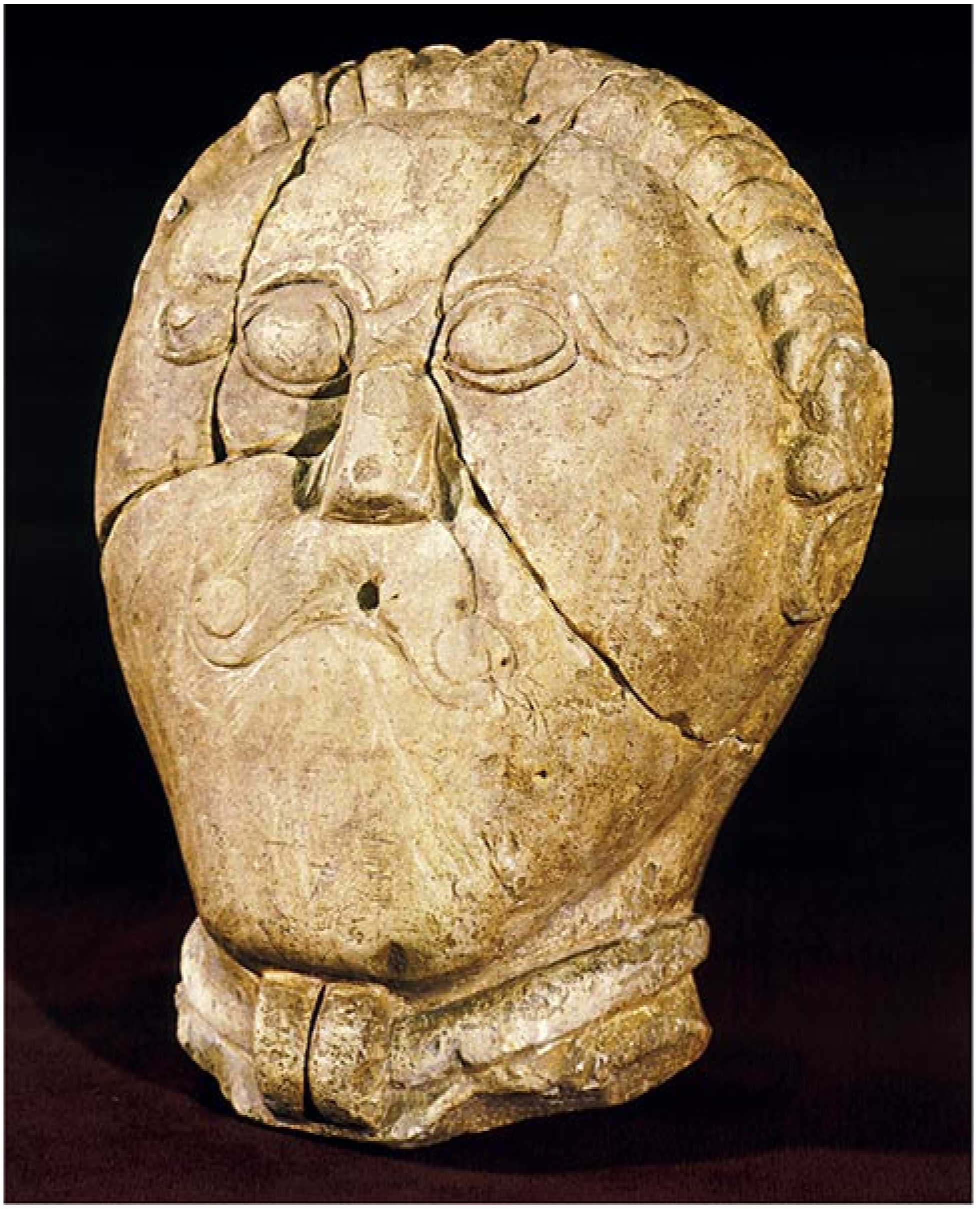


10.29 Statue, probably a god, wearing a torc and carrying a lyre. From a high-status settlement site at Paule-Saint-Symphorien, Brittany, dating to the second or first century BC. Musée d’art et d’histoire de Saint-Brieuc.

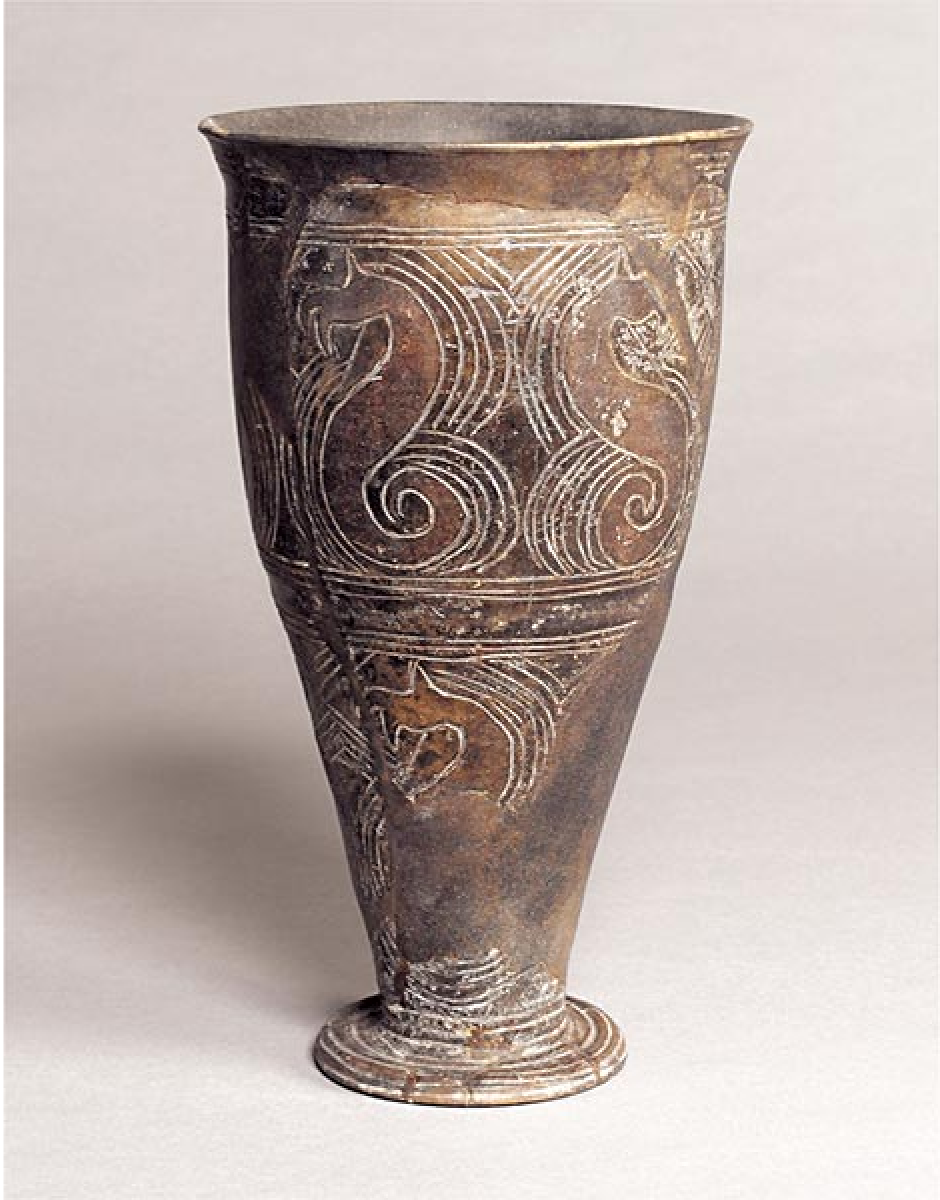
By the fourth century the Breton potters had begun to develop a highly distinctive curvilinear style of decoration, at its most sophisticated on vessels from Saint-Pol-de-Léon, Pendreff in Commana, Kélouer in Plouhinec and La Blavet in Hénon. The lyre patterns and running S-scrolls are highly accomplished reflections of the very best of the metalworker’s repertoire developing in the Marne and Moselle regions. The striking similarity raises the question of the mechanism by which these visual concepts were transferred. The simplest explanation would be to suppose that the Breton masters were using imported metal items as the inspiration, and the discovery of a decorated bronze helmet of this quality from Cerrig-y-Drudion in Wales shows that such pieces had a mobility. Even so the successful transmission of metalworkers’ designs to a subtly curving ceramic form required exceptional skill.

The same range of abilities was demonstrated by the potters working in the Marne region. Already in the fifth century pottery was being decorated, usually with geometric incisions, but more adventurous compositions were making an appearance, such as the facing S-shaped beasts, or dragon-pairs, on the beaker from La Cheppe. In the fourth century a far more elaborate style had developed in which red-fired vessels were painted in black in such a way as to leave intricate curvilinear patterns appearing in the red body colour. The close similarity between the design on the pedestal vase from Prunay and that on the helmet from Canosa di Puglia leaves little doubt of their common ancestry. A slightly later vessel from Bussy-le-ChÃ¢teau, probably dating to the early third century, uses the same reversal technique, but the running scroll is more developed. In the Marne region painted pottery served as a prestige item for several generations, during which time the ceramic artists remained in the forefront of artistic development.

Another potter of huge skill and imagination was at work at Clermont-Ferrand in the Puy-de-Dôme in the late second century BC producing remarkable creations depicting animals distorted in the most bizarre manner, exploding into intricate patterns filling every available space. Here was someone working within the tradition of Celtic art but willing to experiment and break the bounds in a most exuberant manner.



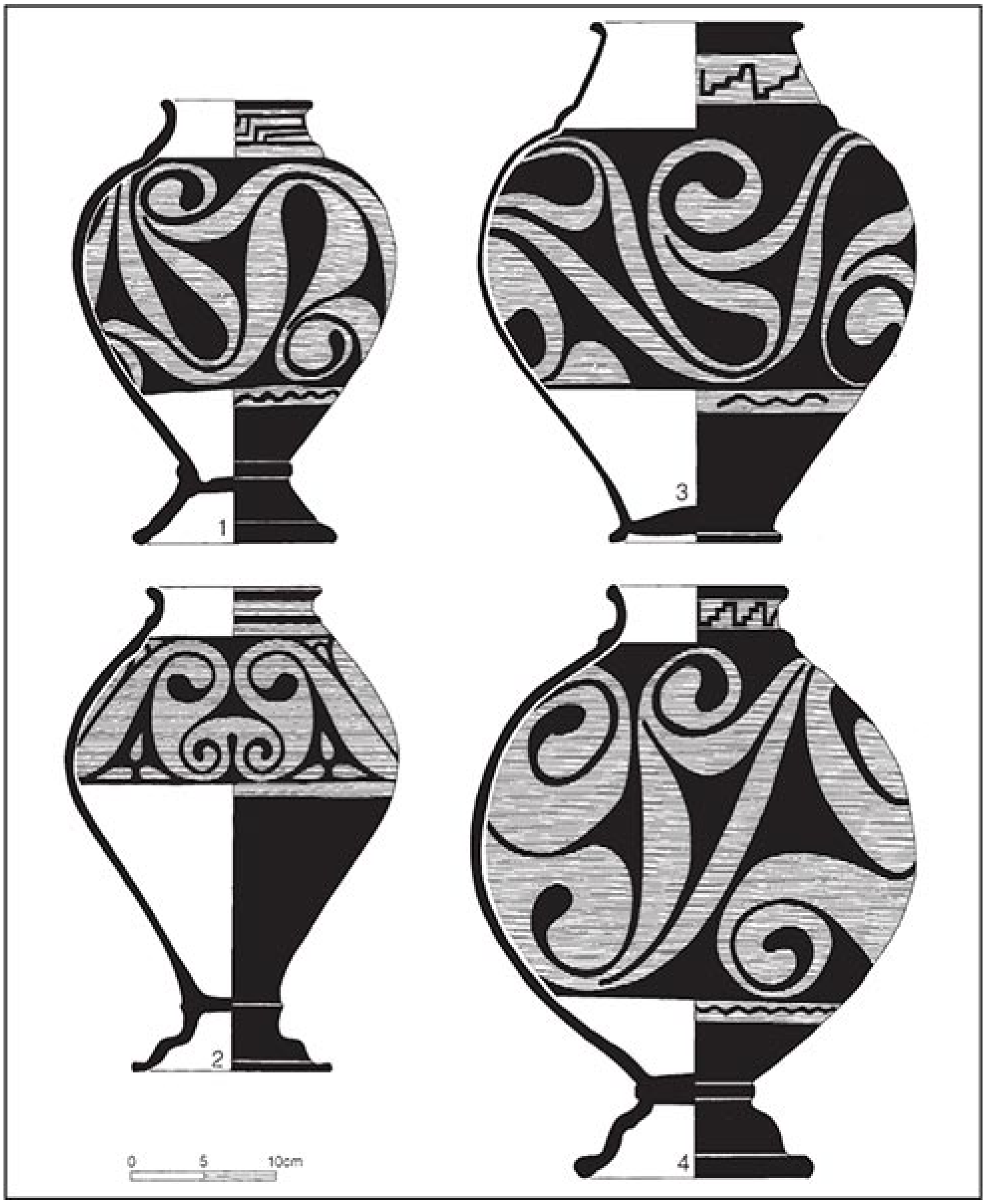
10.30 (Top) Stone head of a Celtic deity found close to a rectangular ditched sanctuary at Mšecké Žehrovice, Bohemia, Czech Republic. Note the characteristic swept-back hair, drooping moustache, and neck torc. Second or first century BC? NárodnÃ Muzeum, Prague.



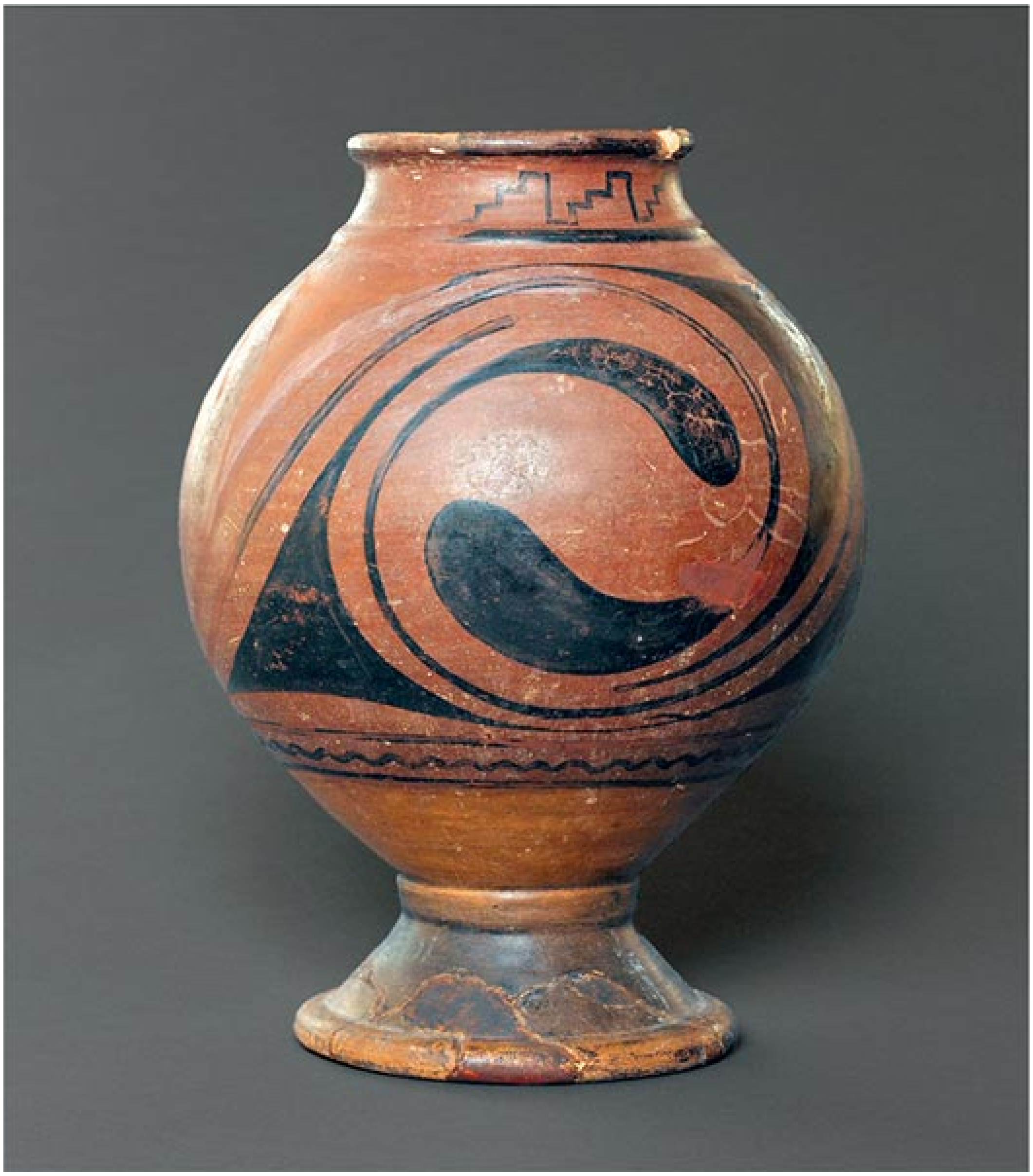
10.31 (Right) Pottery vessel from La Cheppe, Marne, France. Second half of fifth century BC. Each of the two zones of decoration shows pairs of confronting monsters. Similar dragon-pairs frequently ornament the hilt ends of sword sheaths. Musée d'archéologie nationale, Saint-Germain-en-Laye, Paris.

The inscribed curvilinear decoration of Brittany and the painted outputs of the Marne and Puy-de-Dôme are among the most impressive examples of potters' art in the La Tène period, but other regions could also boast modest outputs. In the south-west of Britain, for example, a number of different production centres created their own simplified versions of curvilinear decorated pottery, perhaps influenced by their neighbours across the Channel in Brittany, while in Northamptonshire a different curvilinear style of pottery decoration developed. In Hungary, on the other hand, potters favoured more plastic forms of decoration in the form of human or animal heads usually at the attachment of handles to the vessel. In this they will have had in mind the heads attached to metal vessels.

Many of the fine creations of ceramic art are likely to have been prestige goods produced by skilled craftsmen for an elite, perhaps specifically as grave goods, but their more lowly value, when compared with metalwork, and their general fragility will have mitigated against movement far from their territory of origin. Below this level of production were far more humble pots, essentially the folk art of the ordinary people, produced to serve everyday needs, to symbolize the ethnic unity of the community, and perhaps to reflect aspects of their social relationships.

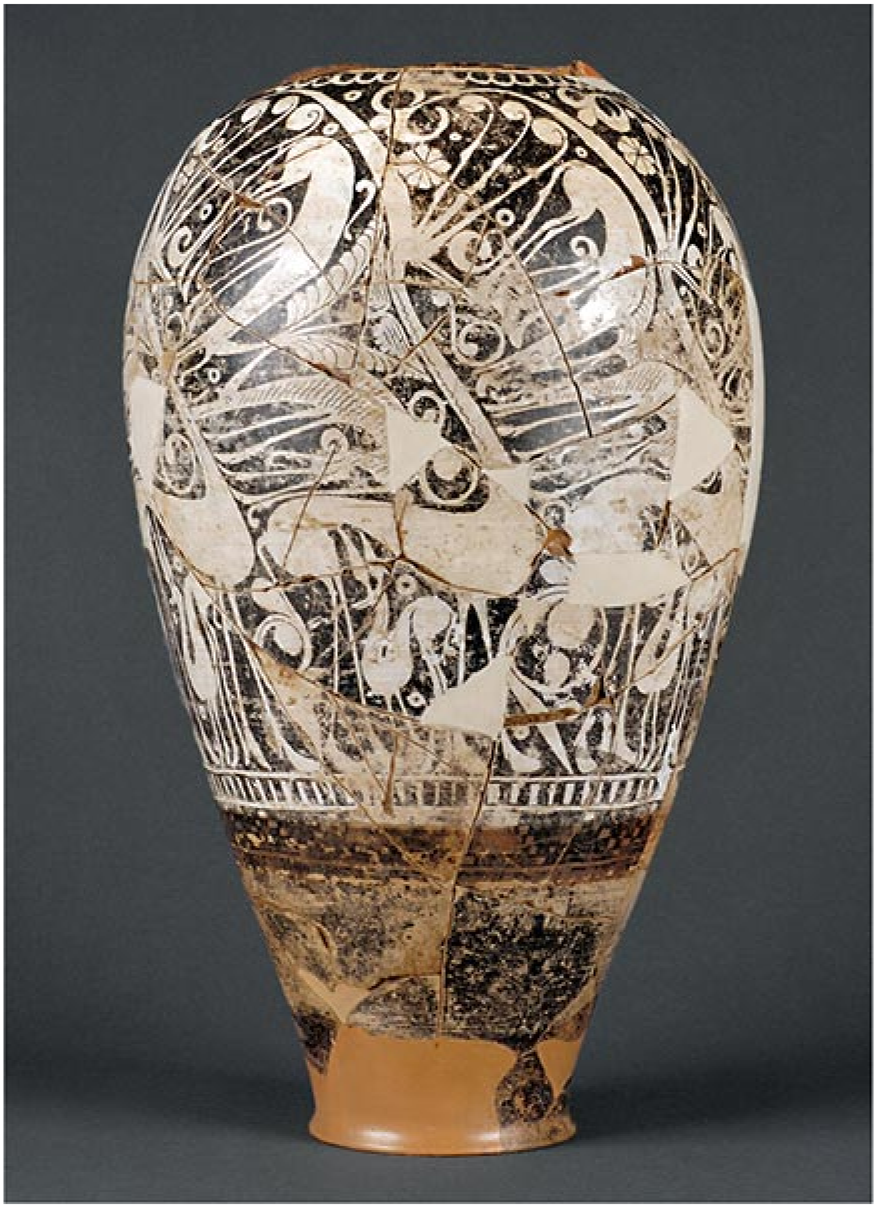


10.32 (Left) Black-and-red-painted pottery of the Early La Tène period from graves in Champagne. 1 ‘Le Champ la Guerre’, Prunay; 2 ‘Quartier Saint-Basles’, Prunay; 3 ‘Culvidame’, Bussy-le-ChÃ¢teau; 4 ‘Le Mont de Fourche’, Lavannes.



10.33 (Right) Painted pottery vessel from the cemetery of Fosse-Minore at Caurel, Marne, France. Second half of fourth century BC. Musée d'archéologie nationale, Saint-Germain-en-Laye, Paris.

That decorative motifs of originality and vigour were a regular part of everyday existence is shown by the wooden vessels preserved at the lake village of Glastonbury in Somerset. At this level we might reasonably begin to wonder whether decoration is here being used for no reason other than to give pleasure.

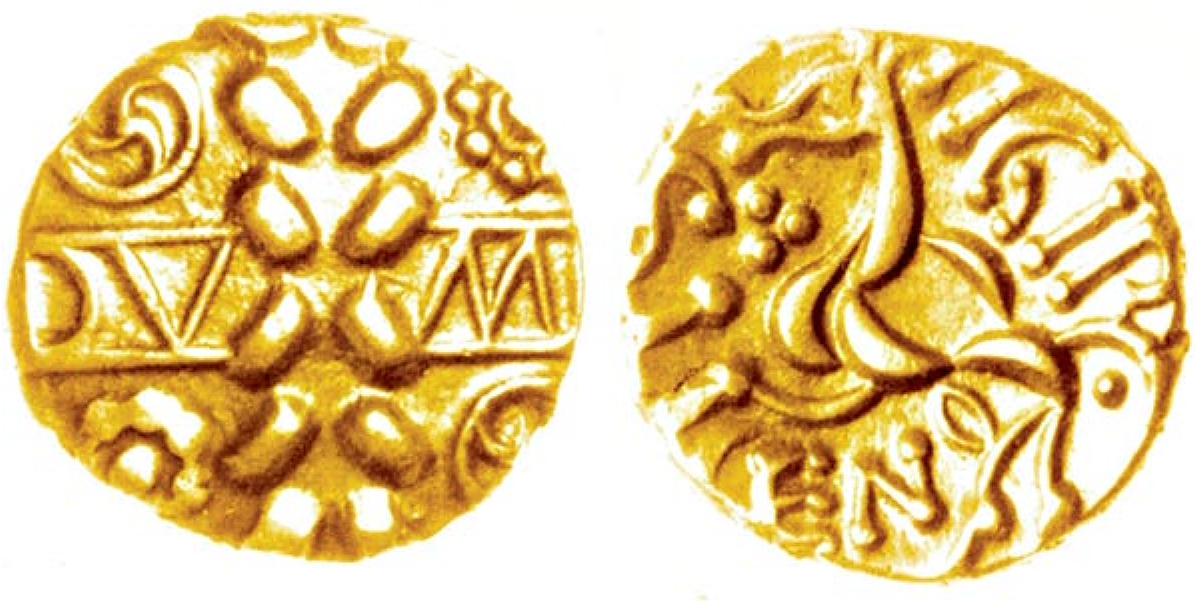


10.34 Ceramic vessel from Clermont-Ferrand, Puy-de-Dôme, France, dating to the late second century BC. The elaborate painting of the animals flits between pattern and fantasy. Le Musée Bargoin, Clermont-Ferrand, France.

The Art of the Die Engraver

The debt of Celtic art to inspiration gained from the Mediterranean extends to the specialized sphere of die engraving, the essential creative preliminary to the striking of coins. Coin manufacture began in the Celtic zone at the beginning of the third century BC, the impetus coming, in part, from the flood of Hellenistic coinage brought back from the Mediterranean by Celts who had served as mercenaries, and in part from the Greek colonies around the Golfe du Lion. Gold and silver coin was a convenient method of payment for mercenary service or for faithful clientage and as such it soon gained widespread popularity.

Silver was the preferred medium in the Middle and Lower Danube, the Balkans, northern Italy, and southern France, while gold was preferred in the north in a zone stretching from Bohemia to southern Britain. Different regions favoured different prototypes. The most popular in the Middle Danube was the tetradrachms of Philip II of Macedon (359–336 BC), which had a head of Zeus on the obverse and rider on the reverse, but in the west the model was Philip's gold stater, with the head of Apollo on the obverse and a charioteer and team on the reverse. Between the two, in the Upper Danube and Bohemian region, the gold stater of Alexander the Great with helmeted Athene and a winged Victory provided the prototype. Why these different preferences developed is impossible to say—it need mean little more than the accident of what models were to hand when the decision was taken to initiate a particular local series.

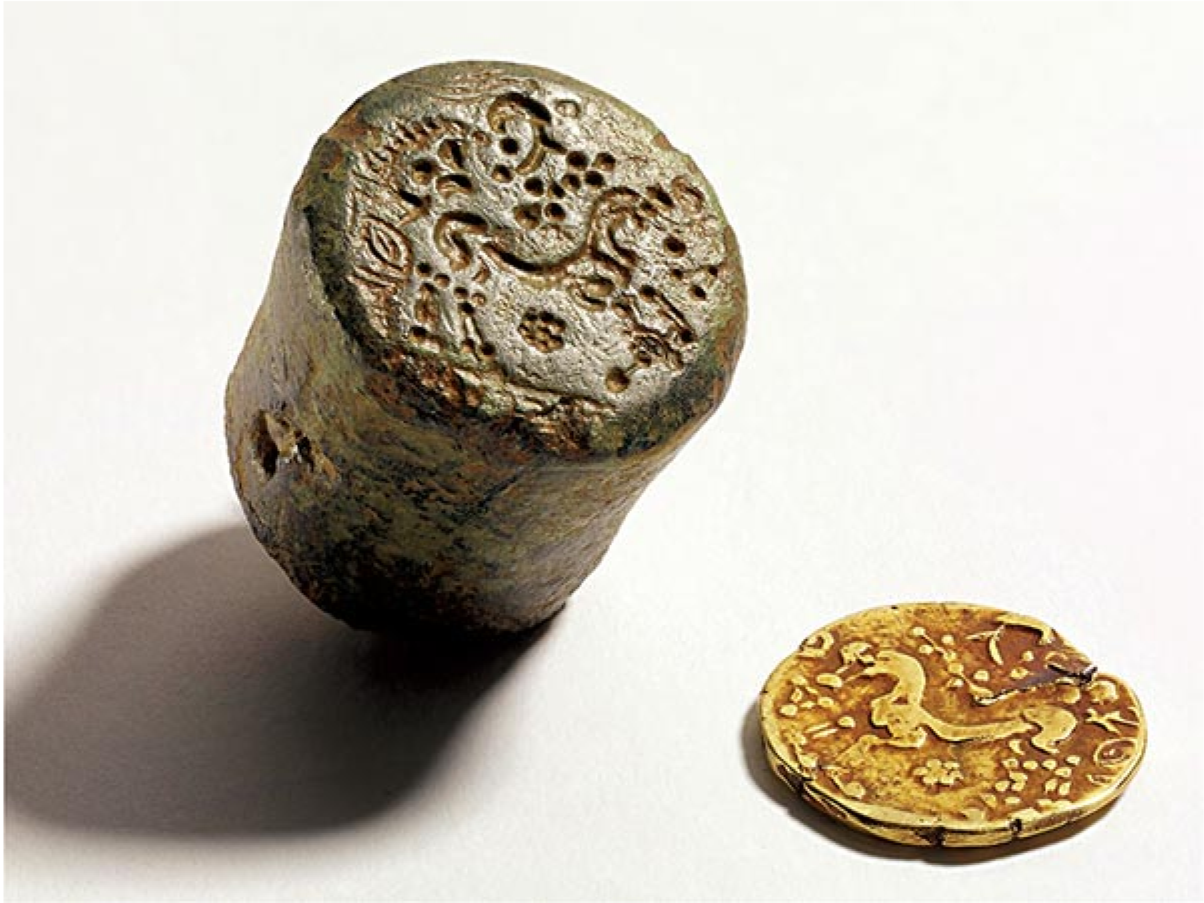


10.35 Gold stater of Dumnocoveros Tigirseno of the British tribe the Corieltavi, who occupied much of Lincolnshire. The original coin is 19 millimetres across. To make a die on this small scale indicates the skill of the die-carver.

The coins minted in the Greek cities around the Golfe du Lion proved popular prototypes in the west. The didrachms of Rhoda were widely copied in south-western Gaul in the basin of the Garonne, while the communities of the Po valley favoured the model provided by Massiliot drachms.

The processes involved in manufacturing coins were comparatively simple. To begin with the appropriate amount of metal had to be exactly weighed out and reduced to a blank by melting in a proformer. In the first century BC rectangular sheets of baked clay with rows of deep indentations were used, so that fifty or more blanks could be produced at any one time. The blank (or flan) was then placed between two engraved dies, one firmly fixed to a base, the other held in the hand. The hand-held die was then struck a heavy blow impressing both designs onto the flan.

The huge array of Celtic coinage available for study leaves little doubt that from the third century BC there existed a distinct class of craftsmen highly skilled at the intricate art of die cutting. Not only were these craftsmen technically accomplished, with a steady hand and fine eyesight, but they were creative artists in their own right. The vitality and sense of movement they were able to create, particularly when dealing with the horse and chariot, are remarkable. The freedom (and constraint) of the die provided the stimulus for a creativity which, in many instances, surpassed that achieved by craftsmen working on larger scales. The art of the coin engraver deserves far more attention than it has been afforded by numismatists more intent on classification.



10.36 Gold stater of Dumnocoveros Tigirseno of the British tribe the Corieltavi, who occupied much of Lincolnshire. The original coin is 19 millimetres across. To make a die on this small scale indicates the skill of the die-carver.

The Broader Context

Celtic art, because of its energy and novelty, has justly achieved fame, but to remove it, as has so often been done in the past, from its social context and then to treat it in the manner of modern art-historical analysis is entirely inappropriate. Celtic art was functional and served a variety of ever-changing needs. Its practitioners carried with them not only skill but a deep knowledge of society’s beliefs and values expressed in symbols. That knowledge was potent and it must surely have been revered and feared. For this reason it is quite likely that the craftsman existed in a world outside the bounds of the closed community.

To attempt to understand the nature of a society through an observer-imposed interpretation of its art is a dangerous game. But is it too simplistic to see in the tightly sprung tension of the art of the fourth and third centuries something that would have appealed to the reckless warrior hordes, or in the enigmatic faces which peer from the stylized foliage a vision that evoked the shape-shifting of the gods?

11

Religious Systems

In describing the Irish and Welsh vernacular sources for Celtic religious beliefs, the Irish scholar Proinsias MacCana, in a memorable phrase, referred to the ‘fertile chaos of the insular tradition’. ‘Fertile chaos’ perfectly characterizes the enormously rich array of partial and confusing evidence available to us from a wide variety of sources reflecting on the religious beliefs of the Celtic peoples. It may fairly be said that there is more, and more varied, evidence for Celtic belief systems than for any other aspect of Celtic life. The only problem is to be able to assemble it in a systematic form which does not too greatly oversimplify the intricate texture of its detail.

The Greek and Roman texts provide a number of pertinent observations, but these are at best anecdotal, offered largely as colourful background by writers whose prime intention was to communicate other messages. The most comprehensive account is that given by Caesar but, though useful, its summary nature could lead to confusion if not balanced against other evidence. Similarly the immensely rich vernacular literature of the Insular Celts must be approached in the awareness that Celtic religion was not necessarily consistent across Europe, nor was it unchanging. The very ‘Insular’ nature of the sources and the fact that what comes down to us has passed through the emasculating filter of a Christian monastic perspective demand particular care when such material is used as a basis for generalization.

The archaeological record produces an equally varied mix. Iconography in the form of stone and wood sculptures is not particularly plentiful, but, if Celtic art in its broader sense is taken into account, the variety of symbols and images is greatly multiplied. In addition there is evidence for belief systems embedded in burial practice, in a great number of votive deposits, and in religious structures such as shrines and ritual shafts. From this mass of disparate evidence, sometimes distorted and usually partial, some semblance of the religious systems of the Celts can be reconstructed.

It is necessary to stress at the outset the complexity of the problem. Three factors, in particular, contribute to this: the substratum of religious beliefs coming through from the earlier prehistoric period; the relative isolation of certain regions for periods of time; and the impact of rapid social and economic change on those communities in closest proximity to the Mediterranean world. Together these factors have created a variety of belief systems which selected from the general pool of concepts different combinations of characteristics and emphasized them in different measure. Yet behind this variety, broad structural similarities can be detected.

Religious concepts prevalent in the third and second millennium BC helped to form the beliefs and practices of the Celtic communities in the later first millennium, yet there does seem to have been a significant change across much of Europe sometime in the second half of the second millennium. Earlier systems, with their strong solar symbolism, were evidently focused on the solar and lunar cycles, which influenced the orientation of some at least of the megalithic tombs, circles, and alignments of the third and early second millennia. By the end of the millennium these monuments had been largely abandoned, and a new emphasis had developed on the deposition of items of value by burying them in pits in the ground or throwing them into watery places such as rivers, springs, and bogs. The focus on deposition intensified throughout the first millennium. This behaviour implies a more earth-related belief system which may be seen to reflect the increased emphasis now being placed on the organization of the land and its productive capacity. A greater reliance on crops and herds would have generated an increased concern with seasonal changes. Thus the seasonal calendar began to replace, at least in emphasis, the solar and lunar calendar.

Some memory of these earlier beliefs may have been caught up in the myth of the Hyperboreans, who were believed to have lived in the distant north. Hecataeus of Abdera, who wrote in the sixth century BC (and is quoted by Diodorus), said that they occupied a large island in the ocean facing the country of the Celts and there, in a magnificent circular temple, worshipped the sun god. Was this, perhaps, a reference to Britain and more specifically to Stonehenge, a phenomenon about which the ancient world is likely to have had some knowledge?

The Nature of the Celtic Gods

At first sight it might seem that the Celtic world was pervaded by a multiplicity of gods and goddesses, of whom the names of more than 200 have been recorded. But if we accept that individual deities could have been known by several titles or epithets, then, in theory at least, the plethora of divine personages might be reducible to a more manageable system.

Julius Caesar attempts to do so in a famous passage in Book 6 of his *Commentaries on the Gallic War*. Having introduced the topic by telling us that the Gauls as a whole are extremely superstitious, he goes on to match the Celtic gods, whom he does not name, with their Roman counterparts. The most popular is Mercury ‘and they have very many images of him’. He is regarded to be the inventor of all arts, and also presides over travel and commerce. The other deities include Apollo, who averts diseases; Minerva, who instructs in industry and craft; Mars, who controls warfare; and Jupiter, who ‘has supremacy among the gods’. Caesar’s rationalization is clearly an oversimplification designed to explain the essentials of the Celtic gods to his Roman audience, but as such it offers useful insights.

A rather different approach is taken by Lucan, who, in *Pharsalia*, names three Celtic deities, Teutates, Taranis, and Esus. All were propitiated by human sacrifice: the victims of Teutates were to be drowned, those of Taranis burnt, and those sacrificed to Esus hanged. The Celtic names are informative. Teutates means ‘the god of the tribe’ from the Celtic *teutā* ‘tribe’; Taranis is probably a sky god whose name comes from the Celtic *taran* ‘thunder’; while Esus means ‘good’ in the sense of all-competent. It is reasonable, therefore, to equate Taranis with Jupiter as a deity of the sky and Esus (the all-competent) with Mercury (‘inventor of all arts’). In another guise Esus may have been synonymous with Lugh, a widely revered deity in the Celtic world whose name is preserved in a number of place names such as Lugdunum (Lyons) and Luguvalium

(Carlisle). In Ireland Lugh (whose associated description means ‘skilled in many arts together’) conquered the evil creatures of the other world and was celebrated at the harvest feast of Lugnasad held on 1 August.

Less certainty attaches to the other linkages. It is, however, likely that the tribal deity, Teutates, who was the protector of the tribe in times of war, is to be seen as roughly equivalent to Mars in Caesar’s list. His Apollo and Minerva find no parallels in Lucan’s classification but may be recognized among the Celtic gods. Minerva is most likely to be a generalization for a formidable troop of female deities who appear under various names as the consorts of male gods of the tribal kind, as protectors of springs and rivers, or simply as *Matres* or *Matronae*—the divine mothers. Caesar’s Apollo is probably the Celtic Maponos—the divine son—whose cult is known in Gaul and Britain and may be associated with healing springs.

If the Celtic deities are approached through the vernacular literature of Ireland, a rather different perspective emerges. Here the essential structure was a dualism between the male tribal god and the female deity of the land. The male deity was the Dagda, which means the good (all-competent) god who served as the protector of the tribe. His power was all-embracing and included among his functional attributes control of warfare and the provision of wisdom. The Dagda’s counterpart and consort was the Morrígan, a native goddess frequently referred to as ‘the Queen of Demons’ in the Irish texts but also known under other names such as Macha and Maeve, and often associated with the symbolism of the horse. She is both fertile and destructive. The coming together of the Dagda and the Morrígan on the night of the festival of Samain ensured the continuing prosperity of the tribe and the fertility of the crops and animals in the coming year.

This binary opposition, which is probably of ancient origin, was complicated by further deities who may have been introduced at a later stage. Thus Brigit was the daughter of the Dagda. She was a potent fertility force and seems also to have had powers of healing and wisdom. Another latecomer, portrayed as such in the mythological tracts, was Lugh, who, like the Dagda, was good at all things. What we may be seeing in all this is the simple binary system gradually developing a more complex structure over time.

Various approaches have been made to systematize the Celtic pantheon by scholars who, like Caesar and Lucan before them, have felt the need to understand the structure which lay behind the apparent chaos. Some scholars have argued that Caesar was wrong to attempt to separate divine functions. Leaving aside the female deities, the male tribal gods were more or less polyvalent, in that they were competent at all things, and they were also polymorphic, appearing in many guises and answering to a variety of names. In this view the male tribal god was one. Other scholars have regarded this interpretation as an oversimplification, a view neatly summed up by Proinsias MacCana when he wrote:

> one cannot but reflect that if the Celts were monotheists at heart, then they were remarkably successful in disguising this, for not merely have they fractured their single godhead into a multiplicity of aliases, but they have also invested some of these with a convincing air of individuality.

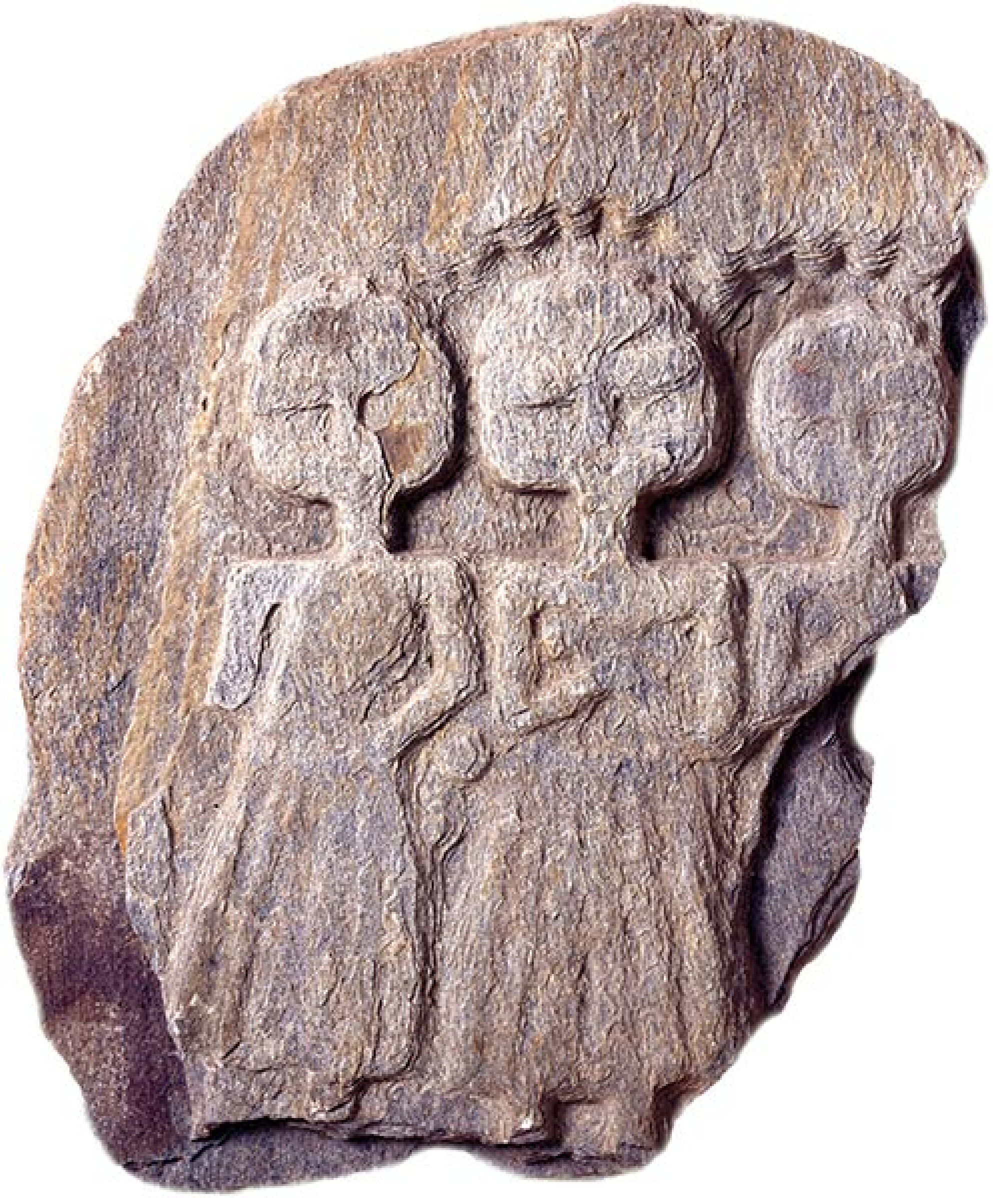
For him, while Caesar's account was wrong to imply that a pantheon of Celtic gods with specific names occurred all over the Celtic world, it was none the less a useful typological index to the principal classes of deity that a traveller in Gaul in the first century BC might encounter. Thus, in addition to the male tribal god, one might expect to find Lugh (Mercury), Taranis (Jupiter), Maponos (Apollo), Brigit (Minerva), Ogmios (Hercules), Cernunnos ('the horned one'), Epona (the horse goddess), and others cropping up almost anywhere.

Caesar adds one tantalizing detail to his account of Celtic religion. 'The Gauls claim that they are all descended from Dis Pater; they say this is the tradition handed down to them from the Druids.' Dis Pater, the Roman god of the dead, provides an easily understandable eponymous ancestor. As the first man alive, he was first to die and thus to acquire control of the underworld, and it is to him that the spirits of the dead return after their earthly life. In Celtic mythology and in the Irish Insular tradition, as Donn 'the brown or dark one', he stands aside from the other gods.

One further aspect deserving of consideration is the prevalence of triplicity in Celtic religion. This is best understood to be an expression of extreme potency rather than of any coming-together of three disparate elements. The 'power of three' was frequently expressed in iconography, as, for example, in the three-faced stone head from Corleck, Cavan, in Ireland or the tricephalic deity depicted on the pot from Bavay in northern

France, but it is also found as a recurring motif—the triskele—in Celtic art. The concept is made even more specific in Romano-British and Gallo-Roman religion in the form of the *Deae Matres* or the *Matronae*—the three mother goddesses—who together form a unity representing strength, power, and fertility. Another, but less widespread, female trinity are the *Saluviae,* who preside over springs. Male deities are less prone to triplicity, but inscriptions to the *Lugoves* in Switzerland and Spain seems to refer to a triple form of Lugh. In the Insular literature of Ireland triplicity is a recurring theme. The great goddess the Morrígan, in her plural form the Morrígna, resolves into three: Morrígan, Badb, and Nemain. Brigit and Macha also occur as triads. It is tempting to wonder if the threefold division proposed by Lucan, of Esus, Teutates, and Taranis, is a further expression of Celtic triplicity.

Sufficient will have been said to have justified describing the Celtic gods as a ‘fertile chaos’. Certainly by the first century BC, when the first coherent evidence from classical sources, inscriptions, and iconography begins to appear, a bewildering variety of deities present themselves, some strictly local, others with a wider geographical distribution. No doubt there would have been an accompanying mythology explaining the supernatural community and this will have varied in emphasis and content from region to region. The many-layered complexity of it all is well exemplified by the mythologies which survive embedded in the Irish and Welsh vernacular literature.



11.1 Small plaque of schist from Cleveland Walk, Bath, England, crudely carved with three female figures probably representing the ‘three mothers’, a triad of deities. The piece is undated but is probably Roman. Triads of mother goddesses were comparatively common in the west of Britain in the Roman period, probably reflecting an earlier Iron Age tradition. Roman Baths Museum, Bath.

It would be unwise to try to structure Celtic religion more rigidly than we have here, given the long period of development, the extensive geographical range, and the variety of indigenous and external influences to which it was subjected. Yet, among the multiplicity and mobility of titles and powers exhibited by the Celtic gods, it is possible to detect an underlying structure of simple binary oppositions: male/tribe/sky/war against female/place/earth/fertility. The coupling of the two produces balance, harmony, and productivity and has to be enacted on a regular annual cycle determined by the seasons.

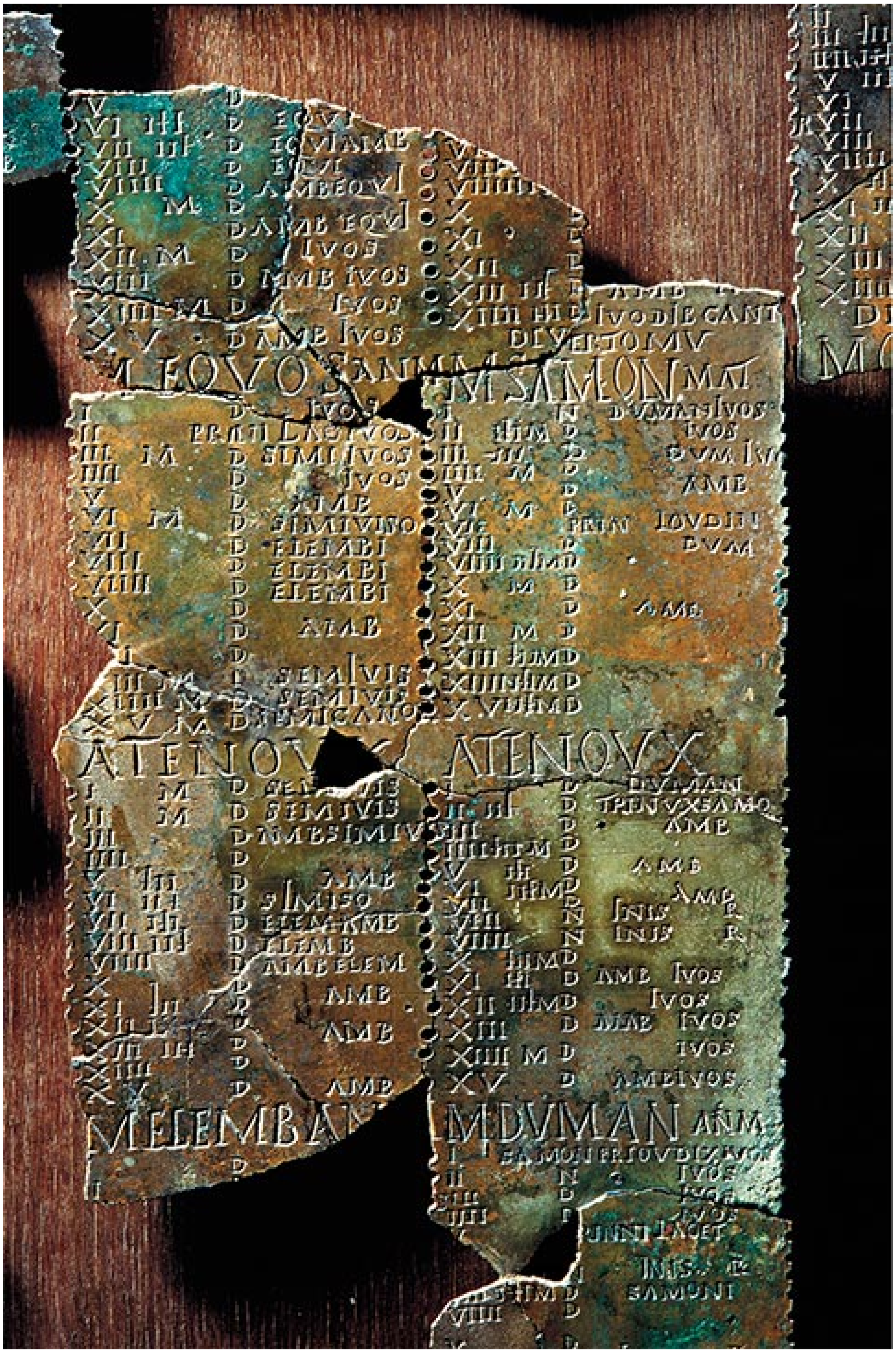
Seasons and Festivals

The Insular literature and the remarkable calendar found at Coligny near Bourg in France, dating to the late first century BC, enable us to approach Celtic concepts of time. The Coligny calendar, inscribed on sheets of copper alloy, is divided into sixteen columns, each subdivided into four months except for the fifth and ninth columns, which contain two lunar months and one intercalary month needed to adjust the system to the realities of actual time. The months are divided alternately into 29 and 30 days, making a year of 354 days. Each month is also divided into a light half and a dark half, the divide signified by the word Atenoux (‘returning night’), and the months are divided between those that are auspicious and those that are not, with the abbreviations MAT (‘good’) and ANM (‘not good’). The days are numbered and some are also marked by abbreviations which must have been significant for those who were informed: there are indicative signs for the festivals of Beltane (1 May) and Lugnasad (1 August). Certain similarities to the Greek calendar suggest a possible source of inspiration.

That time was rigorously ordered need occasion no surprise in a society whose economic basis was agrarian and pastoral. An ability to chart the passage of time and to know when to initiate essential processes, such as sowing the crops and moving animals to upland pastures, was essential to the well-being of society.

The Irish literature provides the most detailed insight into the divisions of the year into seasons. The end of the old year and the beginning of the new was marked by the greatest of the ceremonies, *Samain*, which took place on 1 November. It was a liminal time between the two years and as such was dangerous: the spirits of the dead could roam free. It was on this occasion that the male god Dagda and the female goddess, usually Morrígan, came together, and through their intercourse the prosperity of the tribe and fertility of all their enterprises were assured. In some versions of the myth the goddess, arriving as an old hag, was revitalized by the union and became young and beautiful once more. Samain was the time when all the important communal acts, meetings, and sacrifices took place. The strength of tradition lying behind the festival has ensured its survival as Hallowe’en and its Christianized version, the festival of All Souls.

The next festival, *Imbolc*, which took place on 1 February, is less well known. In all probability it was associated with the goddess Brigit, a goddess of fertility, learning, and healing (cognate with Minerva). In Christian mythology the Celtic Brigit became a saint: her festival falls on 1 February and is still celebrated widely in Ireland. In terms of the agrarian year it probably signified the beginning of the period of lactation of ewes, when the sheep could be moved to upland pastures.



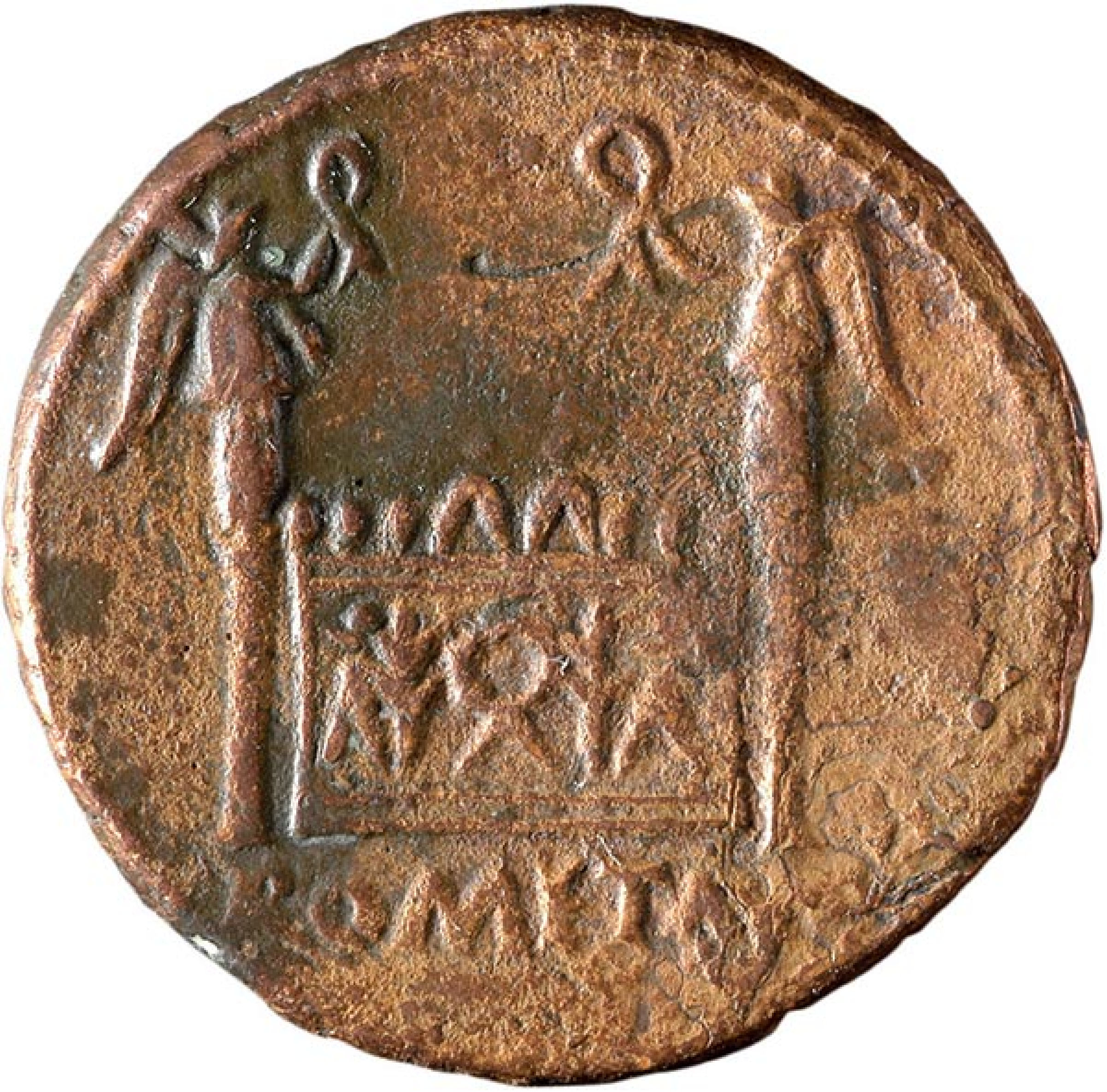
11.2 A section of the fragmentary bronze calendar found at Coligny, Ain, France. It is divided into sixteen columns, each of four 29– or 30–day months. Propitious or unpropitious times are indicated and the dates of two festivals are recorded. First century AD? Musée de la civilisation gallo-romaine, Lyons.

Next came *Beltane*, held on 1 May, a ceremony associated with the Celtic god of fire, Belenus. The fires lit on this occasion may have been used to fumigate cattle before they were turned out to graze on the summer pastures.

Finally, on 1 August the festival of *Lugnasad* was held, presided over by the god Lugh. The timing might suggest that it was when the propitiatory offerings had to be made to the chthonic deities in anticipation of a fruitful harvest. In Gaul in the first century BC this was the occasion when the Council of the Gauls met, a fact neatly manipulated by the emperor Augustus when, in 12 BC, he relocated the traditional Gaulish *consilium*, requiring its annual meeting to be held at the Altar of Rome and Augustus at Lyons. In doing this he was proclaiming the unity of Gaul and Rome by equating himself with Lugh.

The Irish sources enable us to recognize the overall structure of seasonal festivals in its most complete form in relation to the main events of the agricultural and pastoral year. The Coligny calendar, in indicating only the festivals of Beltane and Lugnasad, might be thought to imply that here, in the most classically influenced part of the Celtic world, some of the old beliefs and practices had already fallen away. The suggestion would not be inconsistent with the other socio-political changes which were already under way in Gaul. The issue is a reminder of variations possible across the Celtic world.

Time was crucial to the proper enactment of ritual. This is made clear by Pliny’s famous description of the rituals attendant on the cutting of mistletoe from the sacred oak. It had to be done by a white-robed Druid using a golden sickle and afterwards a suitable sacrifice had to be made. The procedure had to be carefully timed: ‘it is gathered with a great deal of ceremony, if possible on the sixth day of the moon.… They choose this day because, although the moon has not yet reached half-size, it already has considerable influence’ (*Nat. Hist.* 16. 249). In this context one can understand why the monthly cycle with its dark and light halves and its propitious and unpropitious days had to be recorded and accessible to those whose task it was to attend to supernatural matters.



11.3 Coin showing the Altar of Rome and Augustus at Lyons, consecrated in 12 BC as the focus of imperial power in Gaul. Here the annual meeting of the Gallic Council was held.

Humans and the Gods

In most societies interactions between the natural and supernatural world are ordered by ritual and mediated by specialists and so it was in the Celtic world. The principal mediators were called Druids (*druides*, *druidae* in

Latin; *druad* in Old Irish; *dryw* (singular) in Welsh), which is thought to mean ‘knowledge of the oak’ or, less likely, ‘deep knowledge’. Another group of religious practitioners were called by Strabo *vates* (*fáthi* in Old Irish), which probably originally meant ‘seer’ or someone who was inspired by the gods to understand that which was invisible.

Caesar gives the most comprehensive, and in many ways the most convincing, account of the function of the Druidic class (*De Bello Gallico* 6. 13–14). Druids belonged to the social elite and had control over all sacrifices, both public and private. It was they who gave rulings on all religious questions. They were also called upon to act as judges in criminal cases and in disputes about boundaries and inheritances. To enforce their judgements they were able to ban any defaulter from taking part in sacrifices—an easy thing to accomplish, since they were the sole intermediaries—and in doing so they cut off the individual from the gods, thus making him unclean and excluded from normal social intercourse: ‘no one will go near or speak to them for fear of being contaminated’.

Among the Druidic class in Gaul one man was elected as supreme and held the position for life. There was an annual meeting held in the territory of the Carnutes, which was considered to be the centre of Gaul, where all the major issues were settled.

The Druids enjoyed various benefits: they were exempt from tax and were not required to offer military service, though Diviciacus, brother of the ruler of the Aedui, who Cicero assures us was a Druid, was also a fighting man. The privileges of the class attracted many pupils, who were required to spend twenty years studying the doctrine, committing everything to memory. Caesar believed that emphasis on memorizing the teachings was designed to train the mind. This may well be, but there must also have been the desire to keep the lore exclusive to the initiated. In this way the Druids maintained their hold over the population.

Caesar offers one final and intriguing observation: ‘It is thought that the doctrine of the Druids was invented in Britain and was brought from there into Gaul: even today those who want to study the doctrine in greater detail usually go to Britain to learn there.’ If one can accept the factual accuracy of the second part of this statement, it might suggest that the power of the Druids in Gaul had decreased by Caesar’s time largely as a result of the social changes which were taking place, and that in Britain, where a more undeveloped form of Celtic society remained, Druidism was still strong. That this was, indeed, so is suggested by Tacitus' account of the destruction of the Druids on the island of Anglesey by the Roman army in AD 59. None of this, however, need support Caesar's report that Druidism originated in Britain, though there is no inherent reason why this should not have been the case.

One of the functions of the Druids was to officiate during sacrifices to the gods, and there is ample evidence to suggest that among the commodities sacrificed were human beings. For this reason, in the writings of the classical authors, Druidism was associated with human sacrifice which the Roman world claimed, somewhat disingenuously, to find abhorrent. In describing Druidic altars on Anglesey as 'soaked with human blood', Tacitus could hope to offer justification for the destruction of the priestly class. What is more likely to have been at issue is not so much the upset to Roman susceptibilities caused by human sacrifice as fear of the Druids as the unifying force able to galvanize Celtic opposition. It was no coincidence that the trouble which broke out in the otherwise peaceful region of Gaul in 53 BC started among the Carnutes, where the Druids held their annual pan-Gaulish assembly. It may also have been no coincidence that the rebellion of Boudica in eastern Britain began in the immediate aftermath of the Roman attack on the Druidic centre on Anglesey. In both cases the Druids may have provided the spur to rebellion.

Human sacrifice among the Gauls is mentioned by several classical writers. As we have seen, Lucan's commentaries distinguish the particular mode of death which the different gods preferred: the victims of Taranis were burnt, those of Teutates were drowned, while those of Esus were hanged. The same methods of dispatch were enumerated by Poseidonius (and reported by others), though without associating them with specific gods. Strabo, quoting Poseidonius, says: 'They used to shoot men down with arrows, impale them in the temples, or, making a large statue of straw and wood, throw into it cattle and all sorts of wild animals and human beings and thus make a burnt offering' (*Geog.* 4. 4. 6). Burning victims alive is also mentioned by Caesar, probably quoting the same source. It is interesting that Strabo uses the past tense, which might suggest that the practice had died out in Gaul by the first century BC. Britain, however, still upheld traditional values. Not only were victims sacrificed on the altars of Anglesey, but Boudica chose to impale captives taken during the rebellion of AD 60, though whether out of sheer ferocity or as offerings to the gods of war is not clear.

A distinction should be made between human sacrifice made to propitiate the gods and that performed in the interests of divination. Diodorus Siculus, probably quoting Poseidonius, is informative. In this regard, when enquiring into important matters, he tells us,

> they devote to death a human being and stab him with a dagger in the region of the diaphragm and when he has fallen they foretell the future from his fall and from the convulsions of his limbs and, moreover, from the spurting of the blood, placing their trust in some ancient and long continued observation of these practices.
>
> (*Hist.* 5. 31)

A little earlier in the same passage Diodorus describes auguries, based on sacrificed animals, which are made by ‘seers’, taking care to distinguish these practitioners from the Druids. By implication, therefore, it is the ‘seers’ who were likely to have been most closely involved in the human sacrifices, even though the Druids must have been present.

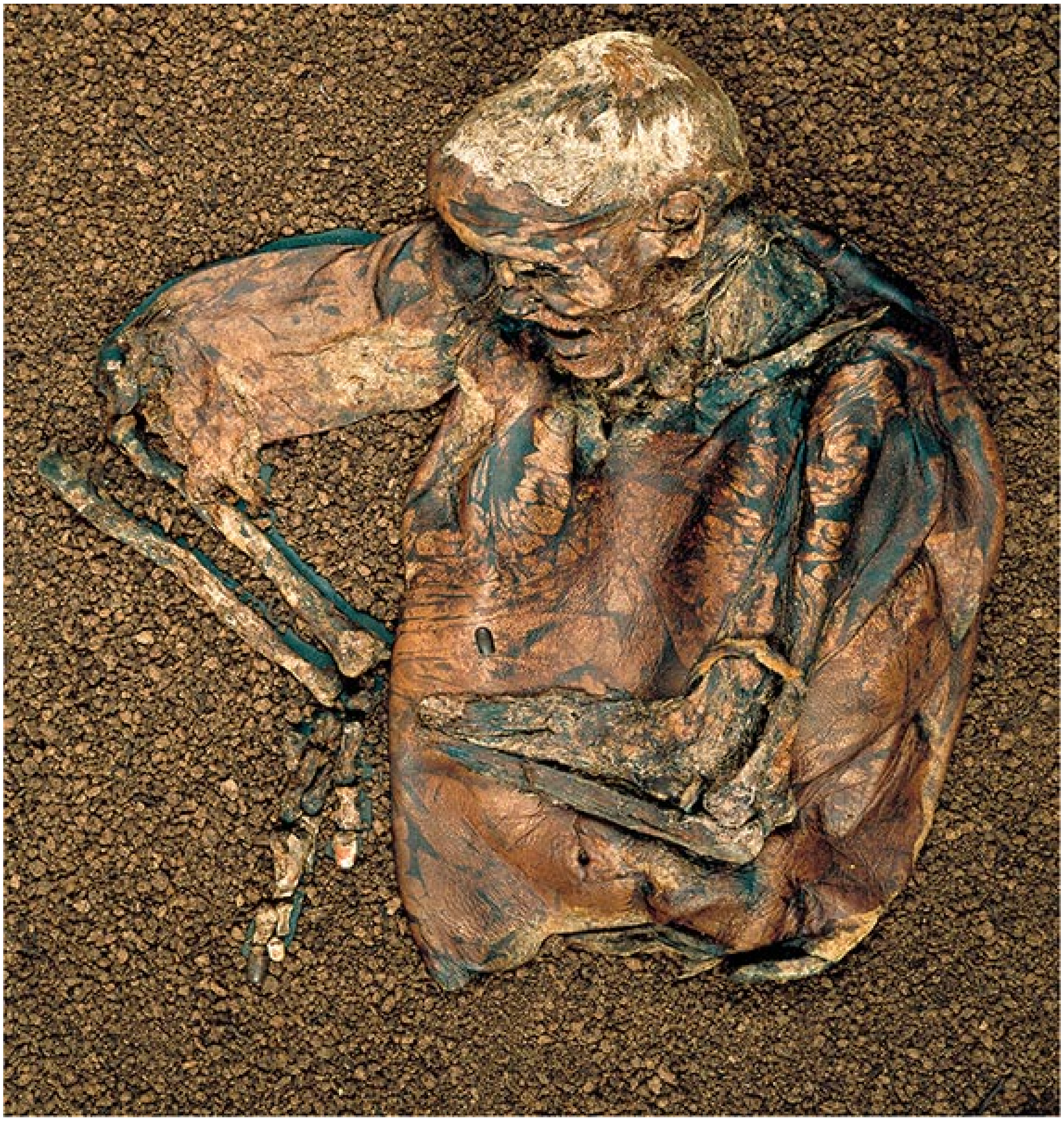
Convincing evidence of human sacrifice is surprisingly rare in the archaeological record. In the case of the body placed in a bog at Lindow in Cheshire in the first or second century AD, there is tolerable certainty of ritual death. He had been strangled, hit on the head, and his throat cut all in rapid succession. This is surely an example of the threefold death referred to in the Irish vernacular literature. Several bodies of Iron Age date have been found in Irish bogs, the circumstances of death and deposition suggesting deliberate sacrifice. Less certainty attaches to the complete bodies thrown into disused corn storage pits at various sites in southern Britain, most notably at the hillfort of Danebury. While the victims could have been dispatched on the spot before deposition, some at least could have been stoned to death in situ. Bog burials and pit burials may well represent offerings made to chthonic deities, the different places of deposition reflecting perhaps different deities.

The concept of dedicating material to gods was well established in the Celtic world. The belief system is neatly encapsulated by Caesar:

> When they have decided to fight a battle, it is to Mars that they usually dedicate the spoils they hope to win; if they are successful, they sacrifice the captured animals and collect all the rest of the spoils in one place. Among many of the tribes it is possible to see piles of these objects on consecrated ground. It is most unusual for anyone to dare to go against the religious law and hide his booty at home, or remove any of the objects that have been

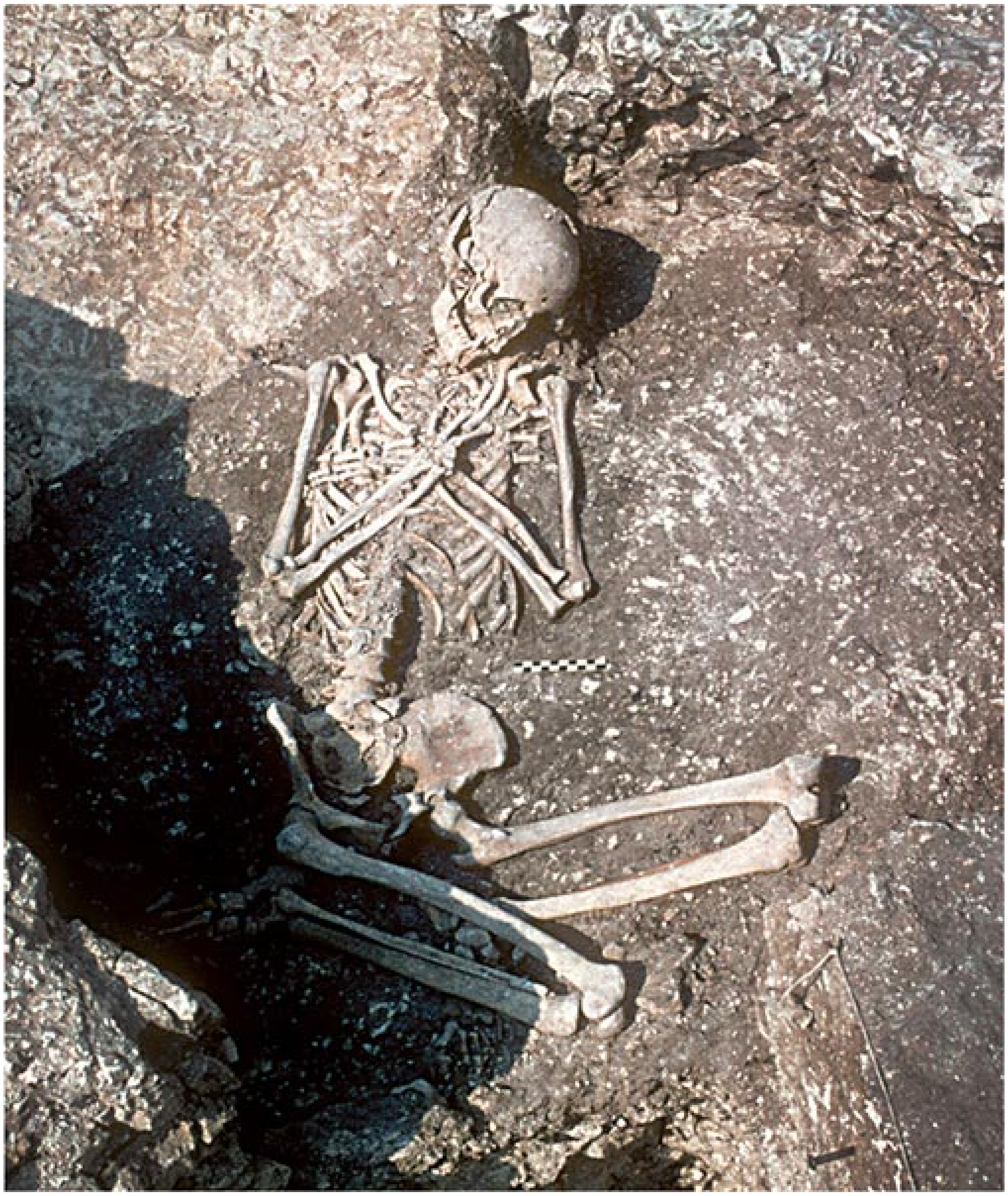
> placed on such piles. The punishment laid down for that crime is death by the most terrible torture.
>
> (*De Bello Gallico* 6. 18)

It may be that for this information Caesar was relying on Poseidonius. Strabo used the same source for his discussion of the great treasure deposited at Toulouse which was believed to have come from the sack of Delphi. Part of it was stacked up in temple enclosures and part had been thrown into sacred lakes. The temple at Toulouse was highly revered by the local inhabitants and for this reason the treasure stored there was considerable. Religious taboos kept it entirely safe until the Roman conquest when it was appropriated, the despoiler, Caepio, thereafter suffering a succession of misfortunes at the hands of the gods.



11.4 The body of a man buried in a peat bog at Lindow, Cheshire, England. The man had suffered a violent bang on the head and strangulation, and his throat had been cut. The three ways of death suggest that he may have been a propitiatory offering to the gods. Probably first century AD. British Museum, London.

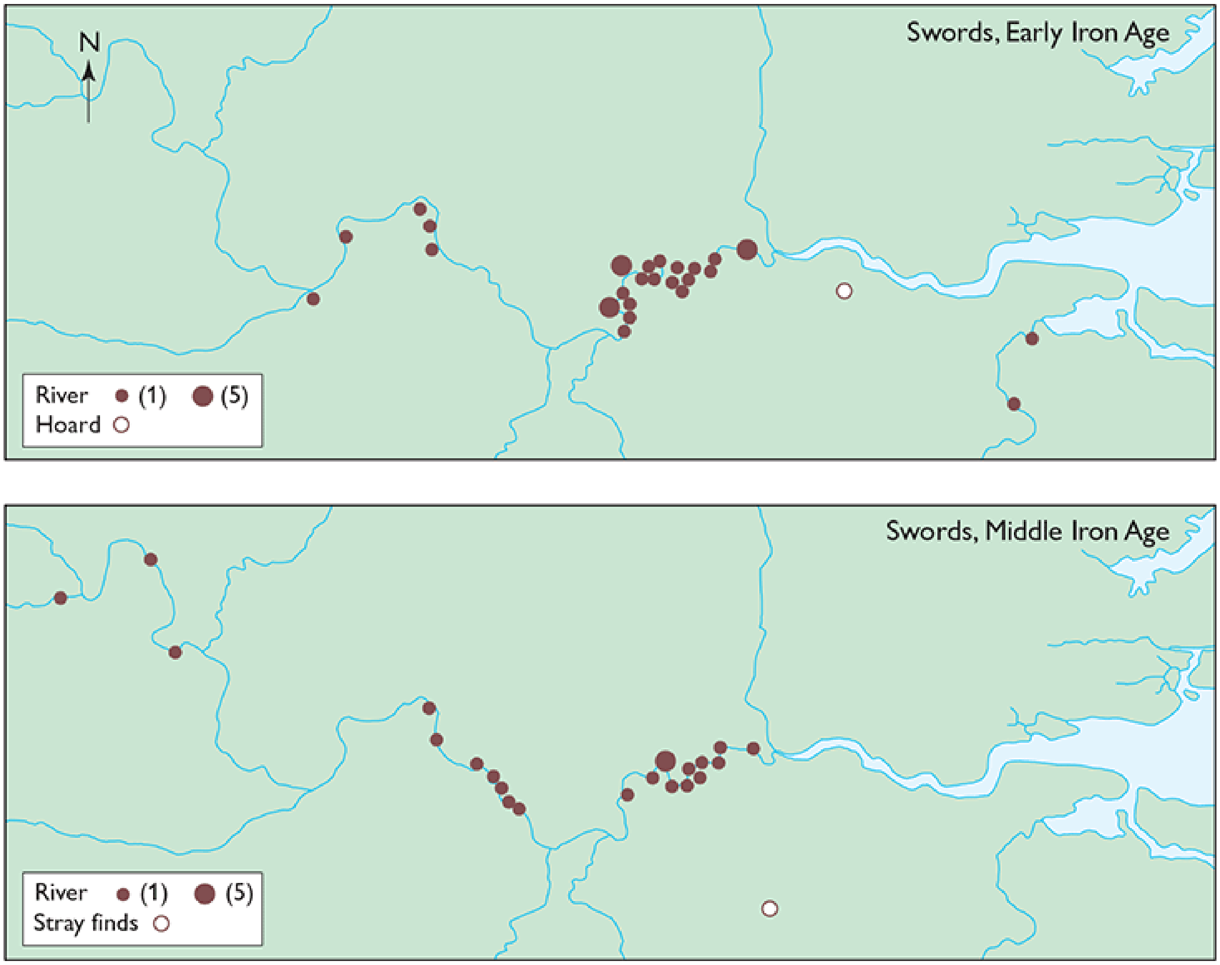
The beliefs lying behind these two accounts were widespread and are well reflected in the rich archaeological record. One of the best known of the sites, which can reasonably be regarded as a religious location, is La Tène on the edge of Lake Neuchâtel in Switzerland (pp. 42–3). Although there has been much debate about the nature of the site, there can be little doubt of its ritual connotations. The principal structure was a timber pier running out into the lake, which served as a platform from which votive offerings were thrown into the water. The range and quantity are impressive. In addition to 269 spearheads, 166 swords, and 29 shields, there were hundreds of brooches and an array of other items including wooden yokes, bronze cauldrons, iron ingots, knives, razors, belts, and so on. La Tène is by no means unique. A similar pier built out into the river Witham was found at Fiskerton in Lincolnshire, and from the sediments around were recovered a number of metal artefacts, including a La Tène I sword in an iron scabbard, though the radiocarbon dates suggest that the structure may have been built earlier. Much the same arrangement was found at Flag Fen in Norfolk, where a timber platform, reached by means of a bridge, served as a place from which weapons, with a few tools and other items, were thrown into the surrounding water over a long period from *c.*1600 to 200 BC.



11.5 Human body buried in a disused storage pit in the hillfort of Danebury, Hampshire, England. There was no indication of how and where the individual died, but it is possible that the large rocks which originally covered most of the body were the cause of death. Here again we are probably witnessing a propitiatory burial. Third or second century BC.

This same general concept is inherent in the famous ritual site of Llyn Cerrig Bach in Anglesey. Here a rock outcrop served as the place from which a wide range of items, principally war gear, was thrown into a lake in the late first century BC or early first century AD.

In none of these cases is there any need to suppose that there was only one act of deposition. Indeed, there is positive evidence to show that the dedications took place over time, perhaps on a seasonal basis or when a particular event, past or impending, demanded a propitiatory response. The examples cited so far were all well-defined locations focused on a structure or natural feature. The possibility of less focused deposition also exists. Very large quantities of artefacts, mainly weapons, have been found in European rivers with no evident concentration at any specific location. This pattern could be the result of deposition from the river bank or from boats—the river itself being regarded as sacred rather than any particular place along it. The Thames provides a particularly impressive example, with concentrations of weapons spanning the period from the Late Bronze Age to the end of the Iron Age. Many of the items—such as the Battersea and Wandsworth shields, the spearhead from Datchet, and the Waterloo Bridge helmet—were prestige goods of considerable value, and it remains a strong possibility that they were made specifically for parade purposes or for ritual deposition. Given the apparently scattered nature of these river deposits and the exceptional quality of some of the pieces, the belief system underlying their deposition must have differed from that governing the more normal array of warrior equipment dumped at one location. What binds the two types of behaviour together is the underlying belief that the gods needed to be propitiated by dedicating war gear to them in watery locations. It was a long-lived tradition which began in Europe in the sixteenth century BC and continued unabated until the Roman conquest in those areas reached by the Roman armies. Rich finds as far north as Denmark, most notably the collection of weapons deposited in a boat in a bog at Hjortspring on the island of Als in the third or second century BC, are a reminder that placating the gods in this way was not the sole preserve of the Celtic regions.



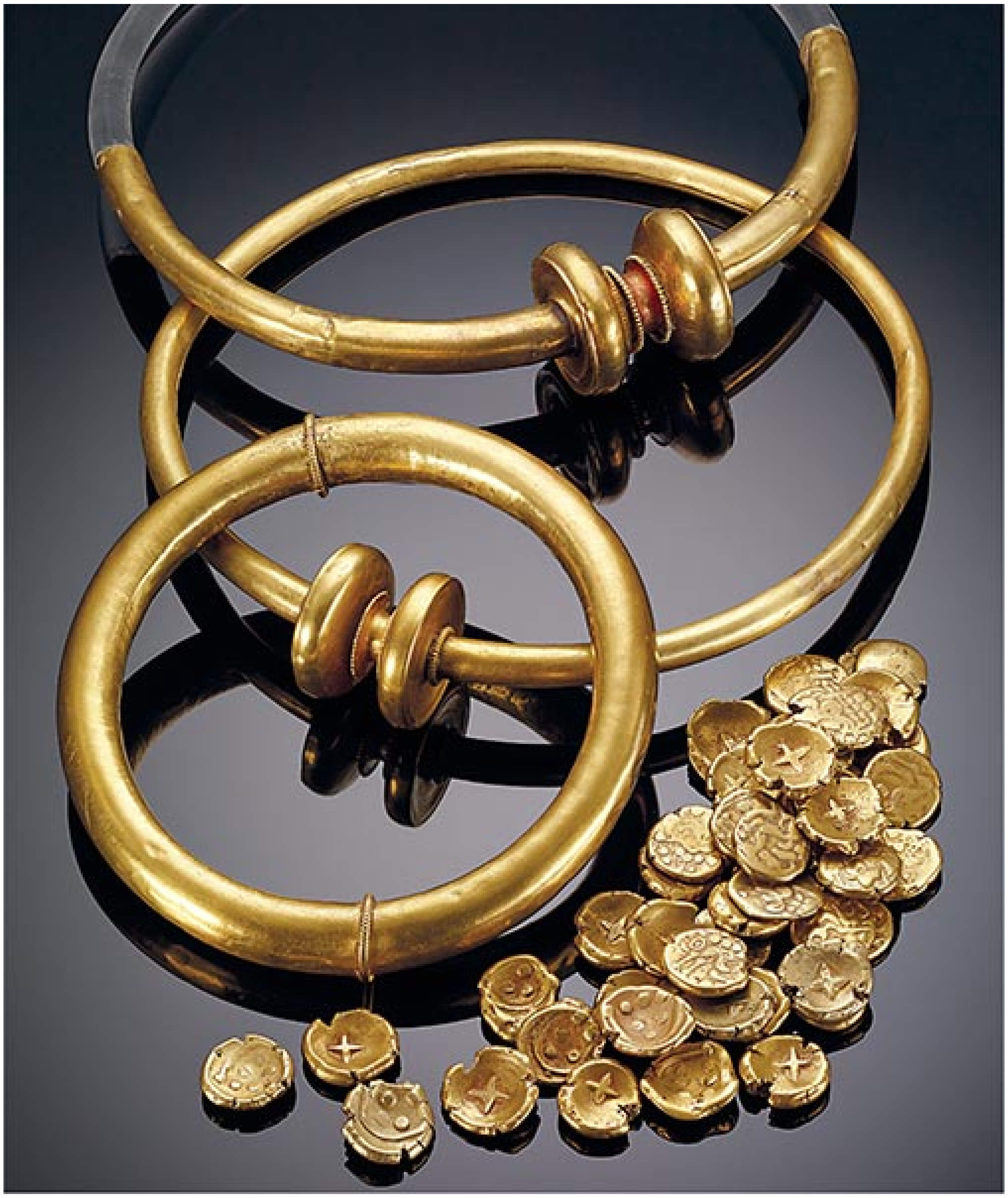
11.6 The Thames may well have been a sacred river in the Late Bronze and Iron Age. From it have come a remarkable number of items of prestige metalwork. The maps show the distribution of Iron Age swords pointing to a slight change in the focus of deposition between the Hallstatt and La Tène periods.

Other types of propitiatory deposit are also known on land. The description of the sacred treasure at Toulouse is an indication that items of considerable value could be dedicated. Such deposits have occasionally been recovered. At Niederzier in the northern Rhineland, for example, a hoard of gold consisting of two torcs, an armlet, and forty-five coins found buried in a bowl next to a post was considered by the excavators to be of cult significance. The total weight of the gold amounted to 321.84 grams, which was almost one Roman pound (327.45 grams). This type of mixed deposit composed of various combinations of torcs, arm rings, and coins occurs widely. At Tayac (Gironde) almost 4 kilograms of gold were recovered made up of a massive torc, ingots, coin blanks, and coins. At

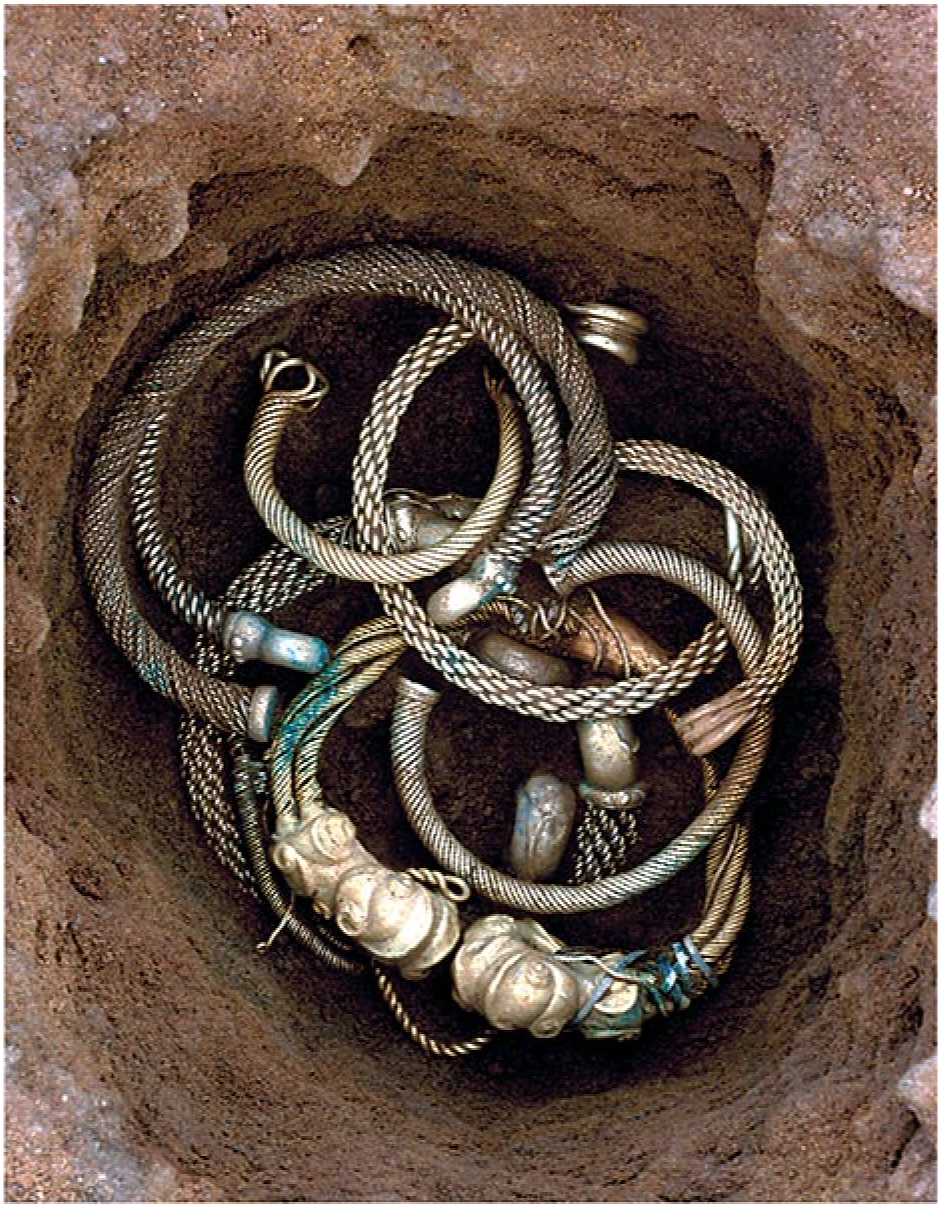
Fenouillet (Haute-Garonne) six torcs were found, while at Lasgraisses (Tarn) two examples came to light.

This same pattern of deposition extends to eastern England. A hoard from Ipswich (Suffolk) contained six torcs, but the most informative site is Snettisham in Norfolk where chance finds and, later, systematic excavation exposed twelve individual deposits over an area of some 1.2 hectares. The deposits varied in size. One of the original finds, producing the famous Snettisham torc, in addition yielded another torc, a bracelet, and a gold quarter stater. Among the more recent, scientifically excavated, deposits were five separately buried groups together producing sixty-three torcs of gold, silver/gold, silver, and bronze. The sheer concentration of material in a small area and certain details of deposition—for example, that some of the pits contained two deposits separated from each other—leave little doubt that the motive for deposition was ritual. Snettisham with its apparent lack of boundary features and absence of structures, other than the votive deposits, provides a tantalizing insight into the kind of natural sacred place implied by certain of the classical texts. It is tempting to see Snettisham as little more than a clearing in a forest protected only by its sanctity and the deeply respected religious taboos that attached to such a place.

The great deposits of weapons and of treasure are likely to represent a tribal response to the deities, either one related to a particular momentous event, or a continuous process of reverence, but it is evident from the archaeological record that everyday life was pervaded by the need to propitiate the deities, and there will have been very many acts of deposition carried out by the community and the individual throughout the year. Evidence for this level of response has come from the large-scale excavations of the hillfort of Danebury, in central southern Britain. Here, in common with much of southern Britain and northern Gaul, grain, presumably seed grain, was stored in pits. When the storage phase was over, and the pits ceased to have a functional use, propitiatory offerings were placed in them. The range of material offered is impressive. In addition to the complete human bodies mentioned above, which may have been sacrificial victims, parts of human bodies have been recovered, including severed heads. The most common deposit, however, comprised domestic animals in whole or in part. While the sheep, cattle, and pigs could have been animals offered by virtue of their value to the community as food, other animals including dogs, horses, and ravens are more likely to have had specific ritual significance. This is most noticeable with horses, which were usually represented either by a single articulated leg or by a skull, sometimes buried in combination with dogs. Other deposits include small collections of tools or horse gear, whole pots, grain, and quernstones. Clearly, in these offerings we are glimpsing only the archaeologically recognizable elements of a highly complex pattern of behaviour. It is possible to imagine a whole range of offerings, including hides, wool, cheese, and so on, which would have left no archaeological trace.



11.7 A hoard of gold-sheet neck rings, an arm ring, and gold coins from Niederzier, Düren, Germany. First century BC. This recurring combination of objects, found in hoards in Belgium and Britain, suggests adherence to a particular propitiatory ritual. Rheinisches Landesmuseum, Bonn.

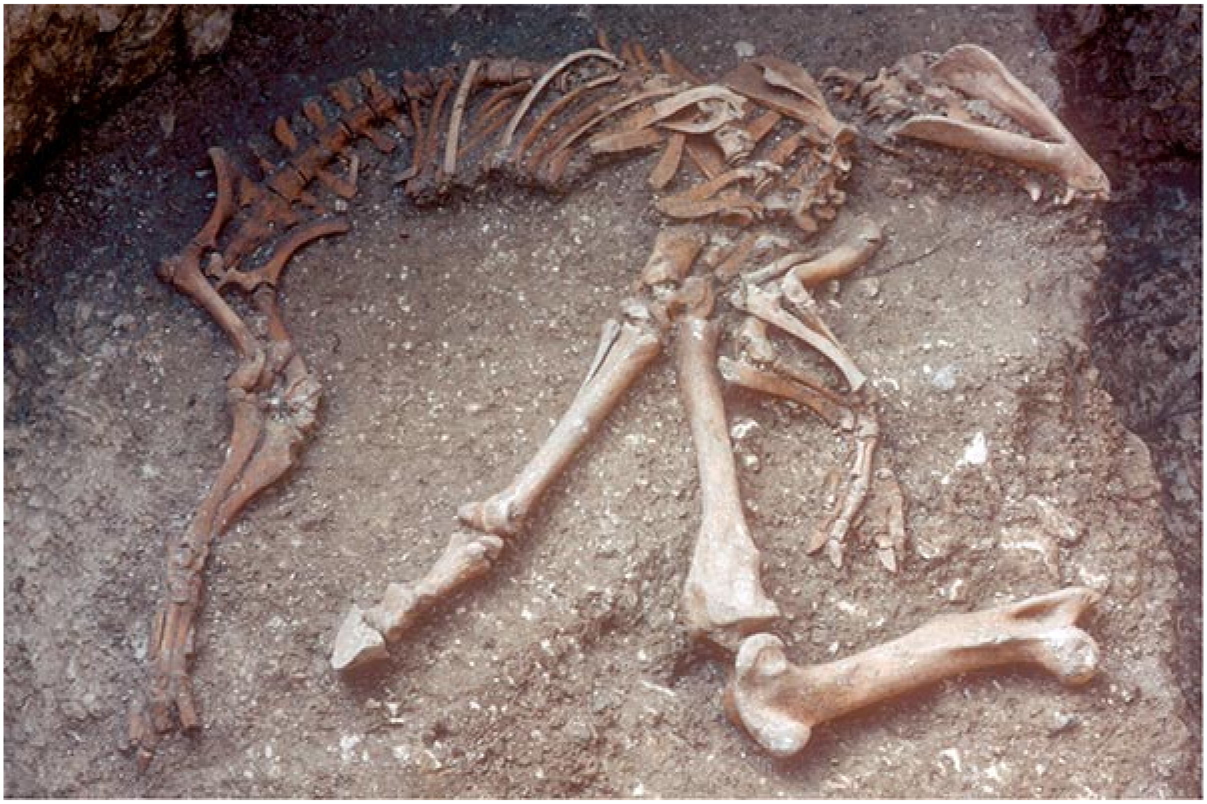


11.8 One of the deposits of gold and silver torcs buried in a pit at Snettisham, Norfolk, England. The surprisingly large number of deposits of this kind concentrated in a small area suggests that this may have been a location sacred to the gods. First century BC. British Museum, London.

The positions in which these deposits are found in the pits is informative. The majority are from the bottommost layer, before any erosion had begun, but some pits had secondary deposits placed after a phase of erosion. The implication is that there was a pattern in the timing of the depositions related in some way to seasonality and possibly to one or more of the seasonal festivals.

The most convincing explanation for this complex pattern of behaviour would be to regard the storage of the seed corn in pits as representing a belief in the power of the chthonic deities in preserving the corn during the liminal period, when it is dormant, and ensuring its fertility when sown. Once, therefore, the seed had been taken from the pits for sowing, it would have been necessary to make an offering to the deity in anticipation of a productive harvest. The second deposition might represent an offering of thanks. For spring-sown seed, the appropriate seasonal festivals would have been Lugnasad and Samain.

For societies for whom the productive capacity of the land was of vital importance, it is easy to understand how propitiatory offerings specific to the community's central concern became dominant. In times of stress, such as a succession of bad harvests, the intensity of sacrifice would have increased. Societies more reliant on flocks and herds will have developed different systems. In the case of upland areas, deposition in bogs seems to have been a significant pattern of behaviour. In this context, the discovery of 'bog butter' in the bogs of Ireland and Scotland is interesting. It is not unreasonable to see in these kegs or cloths of butter offerings of part of a valued product made to the deities by pastoral communities in expectation of a satisfactory milk yield. Other items found in bogs, including wooden containers and bronze vessels, may again reflect the importance of the uplands for milk production.



11.9 The carcass of a dog and the leg of a horse buried together in a disused storage pit in the hillfort of Danebury, Hampshire, England. This combination of dog and horse recurs on a number of occasions and is suggestive of a distinctive ritual belief. A range of other animal burials was also recorded. The practice of animal burial was widespread in southern Britain and northern France and may represent thank-offerings to the chthonic deities for protecting the seed corn stored in the pits.

Groves, Springs, and Shrines

Sufficient will have been said to show that offerings to the gods were made throughout the landscape—both the natural and the domestic landscape. There were also specifically designated sacred locations, known by the Gallo-Brythonic word *nemeton*, which, like the cognate Latin *nemus*, means a sacred clearing in a wood or a sacred grove. The word recurs throughout the Celtic world, from the Galatian *Drunemeton* to *Nemetobriga* in Spain and *Aquae Arnemetiae*, the sacred spring at Buxton in Derbyshire. In Old Irish the word *fidnemed* refers to a shrine in a forest.

Tacitus, in his description of the rout of the Druids on Anglesey in AD 59, writes of ‘groves sacred to savage rites’ which were cut down, ‘for their religion encouraged them to drench their altars with the blood of prisoners and to find out the will of the gods by consulting the entrails of human beings’. But the most evocative description of a grove, in this case in southern Gaul, is provided by Lucan in his poem *Pharsalia* and deserves to be quoted in full.

> A grove there was untouched by men’s hands from ancient times, whose interlacing boughs enclosed a space of darkness and cold shade, and banished the sunlight from above . . . gods were worshipped there with savage rites, the altars were heaped with hideous offerings and every tree was sprinkled with human gore. On those boughs . . . birds feared to perch; in those coverts wild beasts would not lie down; no wind ever bore down upon that wood, nor thunderbolt hurled from black clouds; the trees, even when they spread their leaves to no breeze, rustled of themselves. Water, also, fell there in abundance from dark springs. The images of the gods grim and rude were uncouth blocks formed of felled tree-trunks. Their mere antiquity and the ghastly hue of the rotten timber struck terror. . . . Legend also told that often the subterranean hollows quaked and bellowed, that yew trees fell down and rose again, that the glare of conflagrations came from trees that were not on fire, and that serpents twined and glided round their stems. The people never resorted thither to worship at close quarters but left the place to the gods. For, when the sun is in mid-heaven or dark night fills the sky, the priest himself dreads their approach and fears to surprise the lord of the grove.
>
> (*Pharsalia* 3. 400–25)

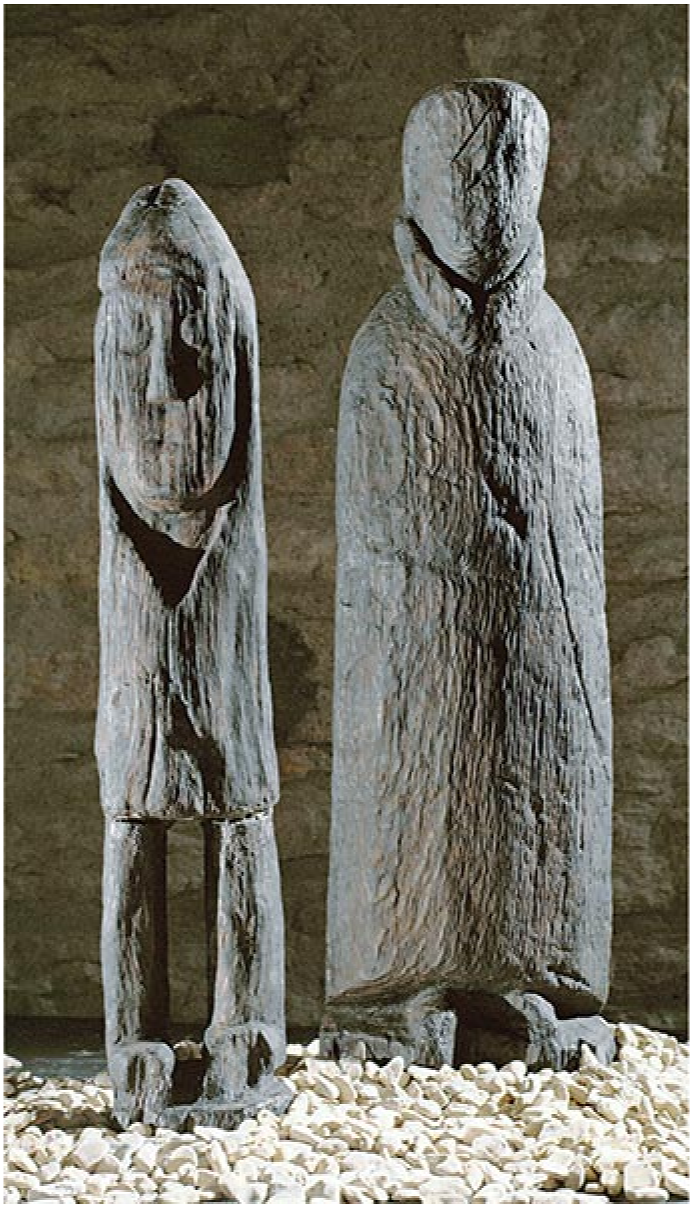
For all its poetic licence, Lucan’s description, which so brilliantly conjures up a sense of stark panic, is probably a fair evocation of the sacred place and of the hold which it had over the local population. Lucan goes on to mention that Caesar had it cleared ‘for it grew near his works’. A more likely reason is that he wished to destroy the power of the place.

Springs, like groves, held a similar power. An interesting parallel to Lucan’s grove is provided by the sacred spring of Sulis at Bath, where hot mineral water still gushes out of the ground at the rate of a quarter of a million gallons a day. Very soon after the Roman invasion of AD 43, a road, presumably of military origin, was driven through the sanctuary within 30 metres of the spring itself. Twenty years or so later, by which time the province was firmly under Roman control, the road was removed and the land returned to the deity, who by now had been conflated with the Roman goddess Minerva: there is some hint in the archaeological record that a grove may have been replanted nearby at this time. The Latin name of Buxton, incorporating the word *nemeton*, suggests that it too was accompanied by a grove. The archaeological recognition of sacred groves is likely, by the very nature of the places, to be difficult, but, as we have suggested, there is a possibility that deposits like that found at Snettisham may also represent just such a place.

Reverence for springs was widespread. Among the best known are two Gaulish examples, the shrine of Sequana at the source of the Seine in Burgundy and Chamalières near Clermont-Ferrand. Both have produced remarkable arrays of votive offerings in the form of small wooden carvings or, less commonly, embossed plaques of metal. The symbolism of many of these items, emphasizing as they do limbs, internal organs, and eyes, leaves little doubt of the underlying belief in the curative power of the waters. Such a belief is also implied by the way in which the thermal springs at Bath and Buxton were developed under Roman authority. That the figurines from the sanctuary of Sequana date to the first century AD might suggest that the sophistication, evident in the depiction of that part of the body which required the deity's attention, was something which developed late, perhaps as a result of Mediterranean influence, but the sanctity of the springs must go back to an earlier period.

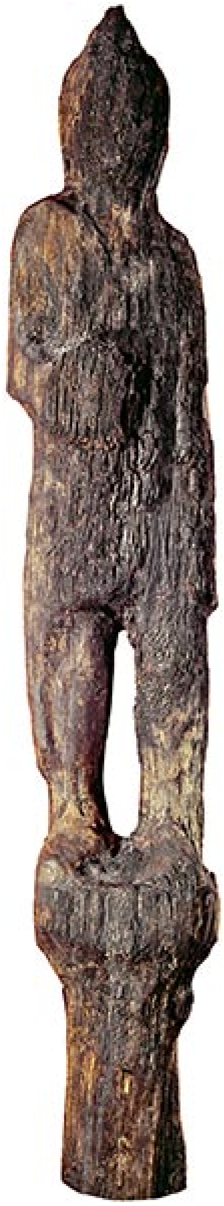
It is significant that the majority of the springs for which the dedication is known were presided over by female deities, but this is entirely appropriate to the generalized Celtic belief which related earth and place to goddesses. The continuation of this belief pattern is shown by the large number of wells and springs in western Europe which continue to be associated with female Christian saints, and in this context it is worth noting that the majority of the French river names are feminine in gender.

The sacred nature of lakes and bogs should also be remembered. The collections of war gear at Llyn Cerrig Bach (Anglesey), Hjortspring in Denmark, and La Tène in Switzerland have already been mentioned, and it is clear from deposits of metal items of the eighth to the sixth centuries BC from the lake of Llyn Fawr in south Wales and from numerous bogs in Britain and Ireland that the tradition of deposition in watery places was long established and was not exclusively associated with weapons. Geneva provides another example of a lakeside sanctuary. Here an inlet from the lake was found to contain a collection of human remains, especially skulls. A massive statue carved from an oak tree felled *c.*80 BC may well have been one of the cult figures which dominated the sanctuary. Its somewhat gaunt appearance is a reminder of Lucan's haunting description.



11.10 The sanctuary of Sequana at the source of the Seine, Côte d'Or, was used during the Late Iron Age and Roman period as a healing sanctuary. A large number of votive offerings were found, among which were simply carved wooden figurines presumably intended to represent some aspect of the suppliant. Some indicated by emphasis the parts of the body requiring divine cure. Musée archéologique de Dijon.

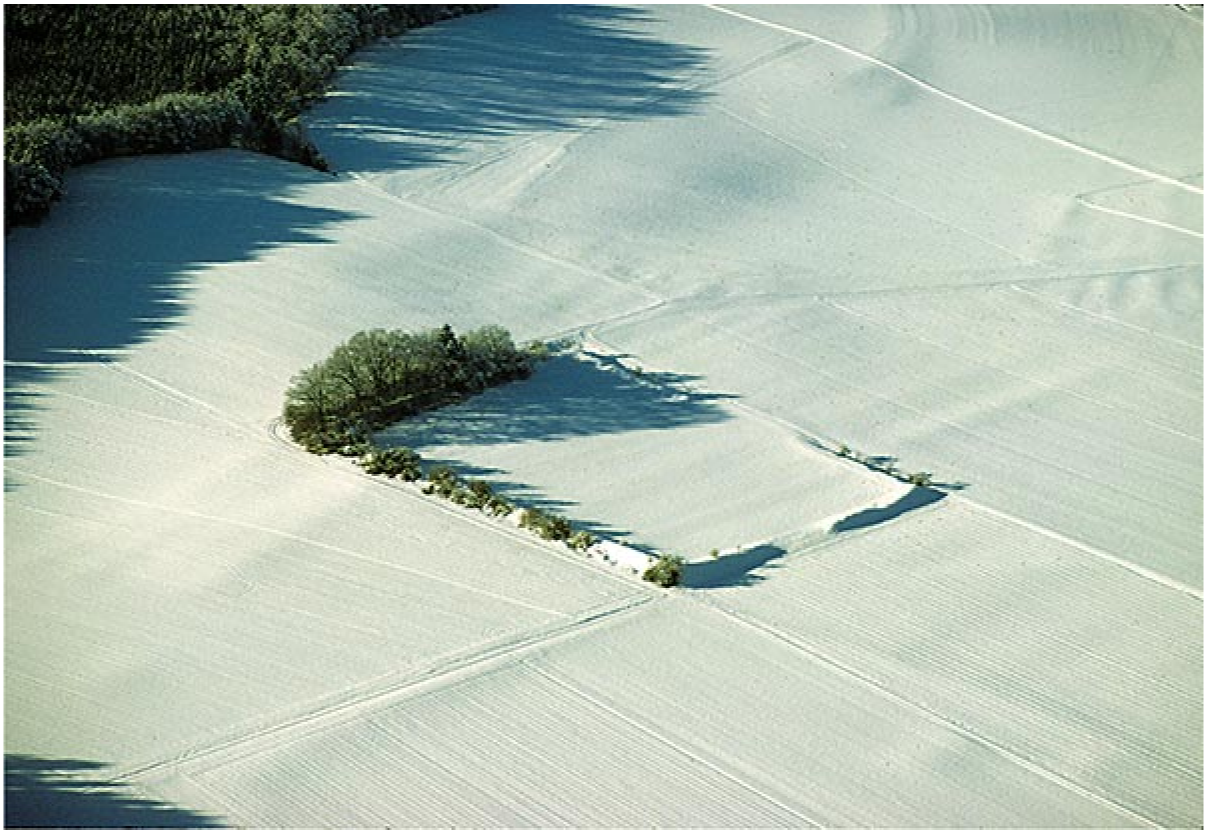
Reverence for the chthonic deities, inherent in the worship of watery places, also finds an expression in the digging of shafts or wells, which are found throughout Celtic Europe. The tradition is evidently an ancient one and it is likely that the shaft found at Wilsford near Stonehenge, dating to the Middle Bronze Age, represents the same belief system. A slightly later example, dating to the Late Bronze Age, from Swanwick in Hampshire, is said to have contained an organic deposit identified as blood.



11.11 (*Opposite*) Timber figure, possibly a member of the aristocracy of the Allobroges or a local god, erected at the port of Geneva, Switzerland, *c*.80 BC. The port was constructed between 123 and 120 BC, based on dendrochronological dates, at the time when the Romans were establishing a firm presence in southern Gaul. The development of the port may have been encouraged by rapidly increasing trade with the Roman colonists. Musée d’art et d’histoire, Geneva.

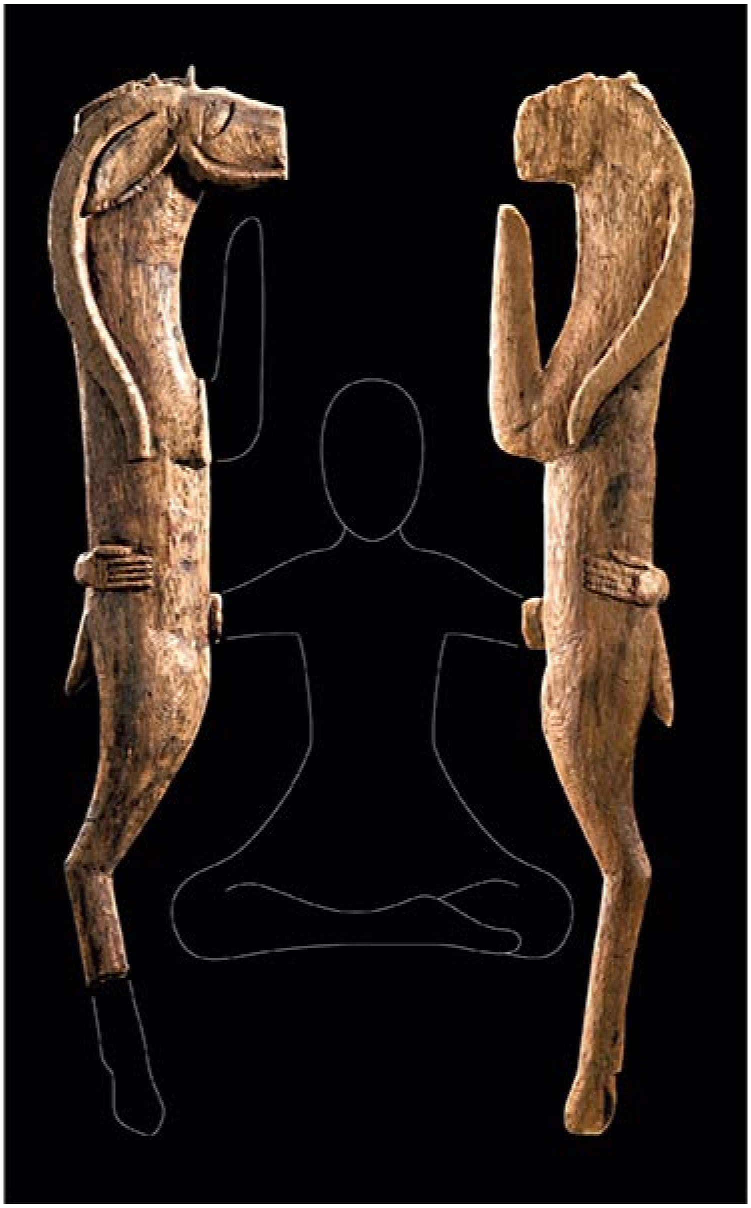
The majority of the shafts from Continental Europe date to the later stages of the Iron Age and many of them lie within rectangular ditched enclosures (*Viereckschanzen*) (Map 27). That at Holzhausen in Bavaria was some 90 metres across. In one corner was a timber structure, possibly a shrine, together with three shafts 2.5 metres in diameter and 40 metres deep. One of the shafts contained an upright wooden stake associated with deposits thought to have derived from decayed flesh or blood. The *Viereckschanze* The Viereckschanze of Fellbach-Schmiden in Baden-Württemberg was differently arranged. Within the enclosure was a small cemetery and a well, the lower part of which was waterlogged, creating conditions for the preservation of the timber lining and of organic remains within the filling. According to the dendrochronological date, the timbers were cut in 123 bc. Parts of a timber structure which surrounded the top of the shaft had fallen in and were preserved. These included a group of remarkable wooden carvings of animals, one a rampant stag, another comprising two goats standing on their hind legs and clasped about the waist by a central human(?) figure, now missing. On the bottom of the shaft were two almost complete pottery vessels. The shaft probably served as a well, presumably for ritual purposes, before it was abandoned and filled. Whether the well was associated only with the activities attendant upon the burials or continued to have a function after the burial phase was complete remains unclear. *Viereckschanzen*, with or without burials, have tended to produce little archaeological material other than items thrown into such shafts as may have been available. This implies that, whatever activity went on within them, the deposition of votive offerings was not normally part of the ritual.

The *Viereckschanzen* differ from the sanctuaries which are found across western Europe. Broadly speaking there are two basic sanctuary types: the Celto-Ligurian sanctuaries of southern Gaul and the northern Celtic type, which cluster densely in a broad zone extending from Germany to Britain.



11.12 (*Above*) Aerial view of the rectangular ritual enclosure (*Viereckschanze*) at Neufahrn, Bavaria, Germany. Enclosures of this sort dating to the Late Iron Age are widespread in Germany and parts of northern France.

The southern Gaulish type is best known from the sites of Roquepertuse (Bouches-du-Rhône) and Entremont near, Aix-en-Provence. At Roquepertuse two separate elements survive: large seated figures carved in stone, which are thought to represent prominent members of the aristocracy, and the stone elements of a stone and timber architectural structure incorporating Janus-heads, a stone bird of prey, a frieze carved with simply delineated horse heads, and stone pillars carved with niches to take severed human heads. Most of the ensemble dates to the third century BC and the sanctuary was abandoned after being destroyed by fire at the beginning of the second century. Many of these same elements recur at Entremont, where the architectural features include a vertical pillar carved with severed heads and another fragment with a carved severed head flanked by niches for real severed heads, of which some fifteen examples have been found, some still bearing nail holes for attachment. Other sites in the region have produced fragments of similar sculpture as well as human skulls.

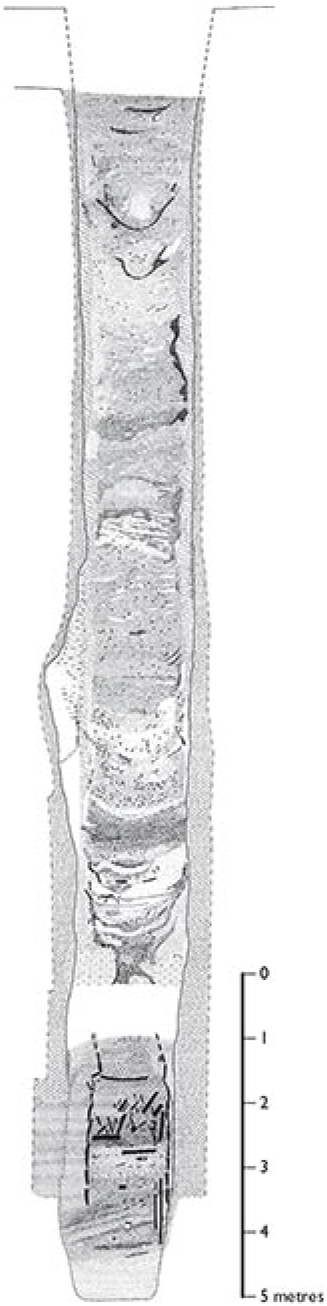


11.13 Wooden carvings found in the ritual shaft and well at Fellbach-Schmiden, Baden-Württemberg, Germany. The figures presumably decorated a structure built around the top of the shaft. The paired beasts, clasped about the waists by a central figure now missing, are also found as a motif recurring in Celtic metalwork. Late second or early first century BC. Landesmuseum Württemberg, Stuttgart.

The religious sites of the Celto-Ligurian area differ in some ways from those of the rest of Gaul. The availability of easily carved limestone and alien architectural models offered by the neighbouring Greek cities of the

Mediterranean coastal zone will have influenced construction, but the principal elements of iconography—the squatting figures and the Janus-heads—are known in other parts of the Celtic world and the collection of human heads among the Celts was frequently noted by Greek and Roman writers. The Celto-Ligurian sanctuaries are, therefore, best regarded as a regional manifestation of a more widespread pattern of beliefs.

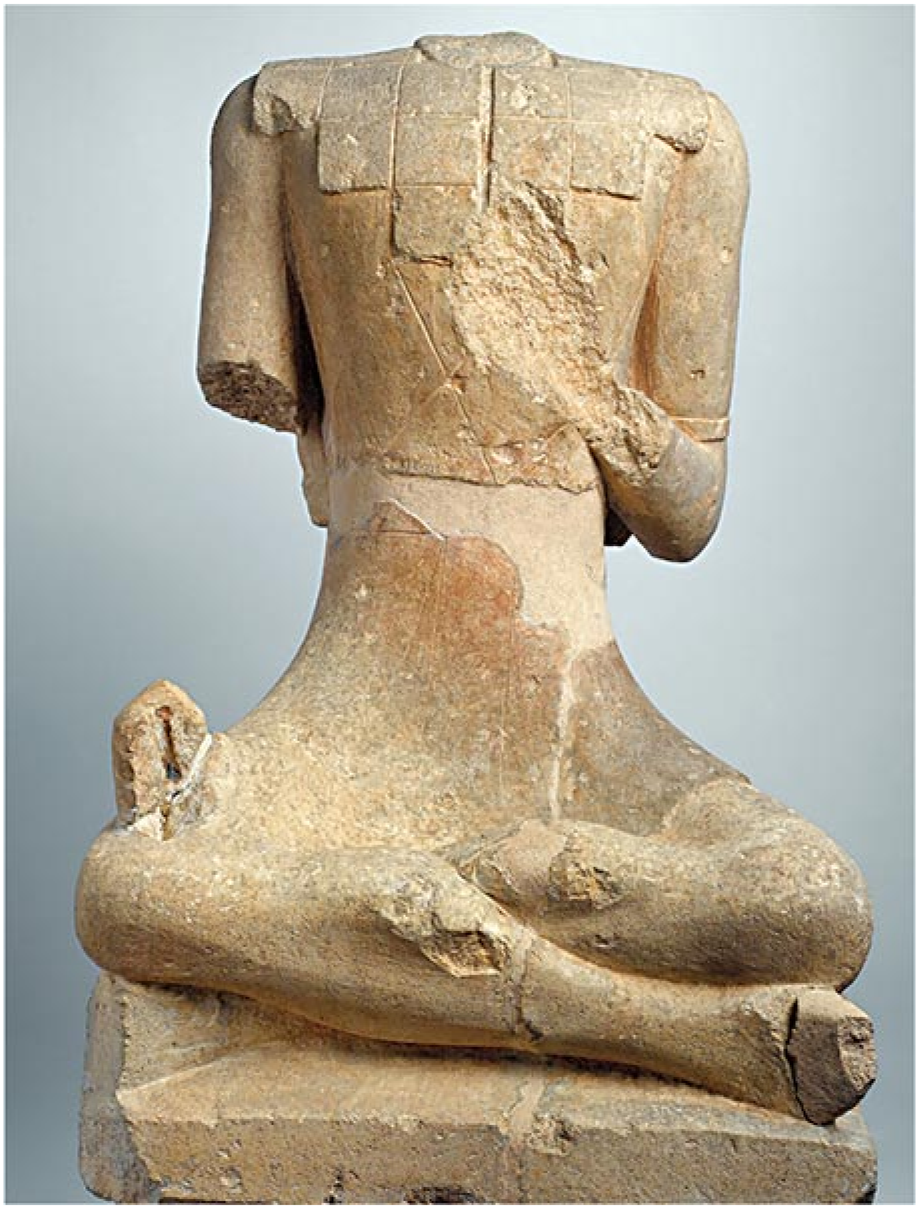
In the northern Gaulish zone the normal type of sanctuary in use by the Late Iron Age comprised a rectangular or circular building of timber usually set within a rectangular temenos defined by a ditched or fenced boundary. Excavations at Gournay-sur-Aronde (Oise) have provided a detailed insight into the form and development of a sanctuary of this kind and of the rituals practised there. The sanctuary occupied a spur overlooking a stream which flowed from a small lake. The earliest building dates to the fourth century BC, and thereafter the site was continuously used and modified until the end of the first century BC, when the timber structures were burnt and the site levelled. The sacred nature of the location remained in folk memory until the fourth century AD, when a Gallo-Roman temple was built precisely over the original shrine. The pre-conquest shrine was surrounded throughout by a ditch of rectangular plan later enhanced by an external palisade. From the fourth until the first century BC the focus was a large oval-shaped pit, in which the remains of sacrificed cattle had been placed. It first lay in the open within a setting of upright posts placed some distance away. Later it was enclosed on three sides by three sets of three pits containing offerings. In the next stage the pits were replaced by a setting of timbers, which may have served as uprights to take a roof. In the early first century BC the building was reconstructed in timber in a more regular rectangular form and was rebuilt again *c.*30 BC, this time of daub on stone footings surrounded by an ambulatory of light posts. Throughout the life of the sanctuary the temenos ditch was used as a repository for sacrificed offerings, including some 2,000 broken weapons and large quantities of animal bones, which were found to have been placed in successive layers, each representing a distinct act of sacrifice.



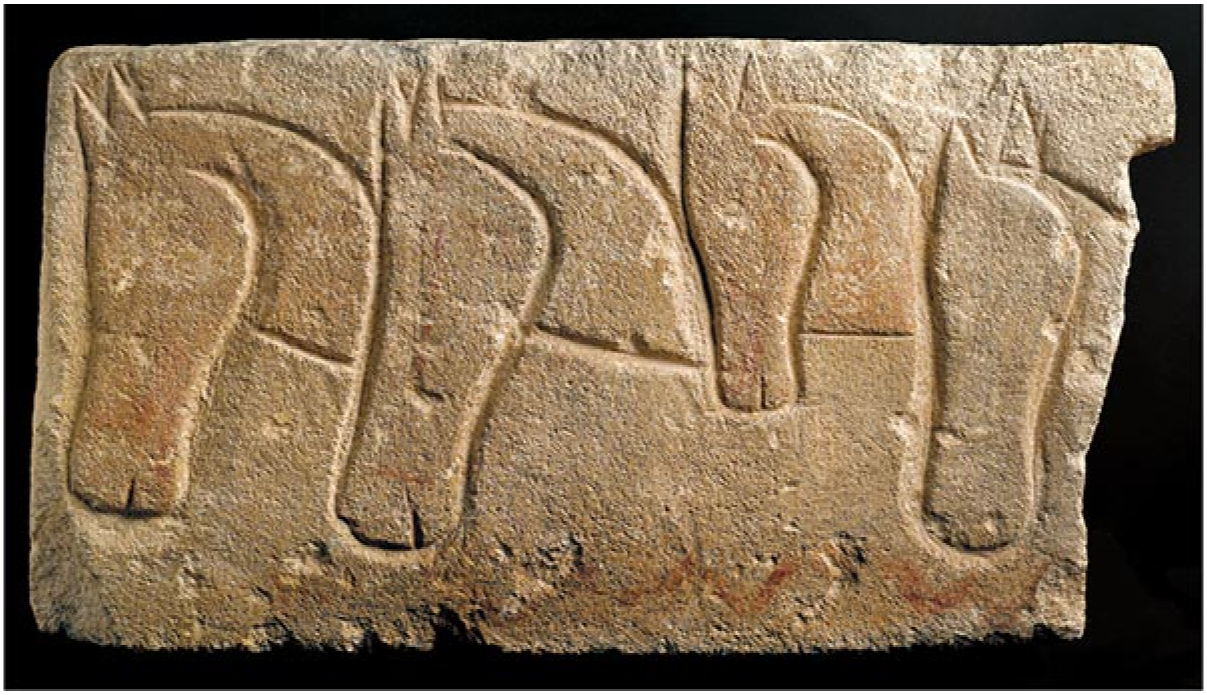
11.14 (*Opposite*) Ritual shafts are a recurring feature in Late Iron Age Europe. In the case of those dug to beneath the water level it is difficult to be certain whether they were dug as wells or for ritual purposes, but use as a well does not preclude ritual connotations. The shaft from Fellbach-Schmiden, Baden-Württemberg, Germany, was associated with a *Viereckschanze* (a rectangular ritual enclosure) and produced well-preserved wooden sculptures. Landesmuseum Württemberg, Stuttgart.

The continuity of the sanctuary over a long period of time, from the pre-Roman Iron Age well into the Roman period, is a phenomenon widely recognized across the northern part of the Celtic zone. Among the sites where structural evidence of the early sanctuaries has been found beneath later Roman shrines may be listed Uley (Gloucestershire), Worth (Kent), Hayling Island (Hampshire), Vendeuil-Caply (Oise), Saint-Germain-le-Rocheux (Châtillon-sur-Seine), and Schleidweiler (Trier); many others have produced evidence suggestive of a long continuity.

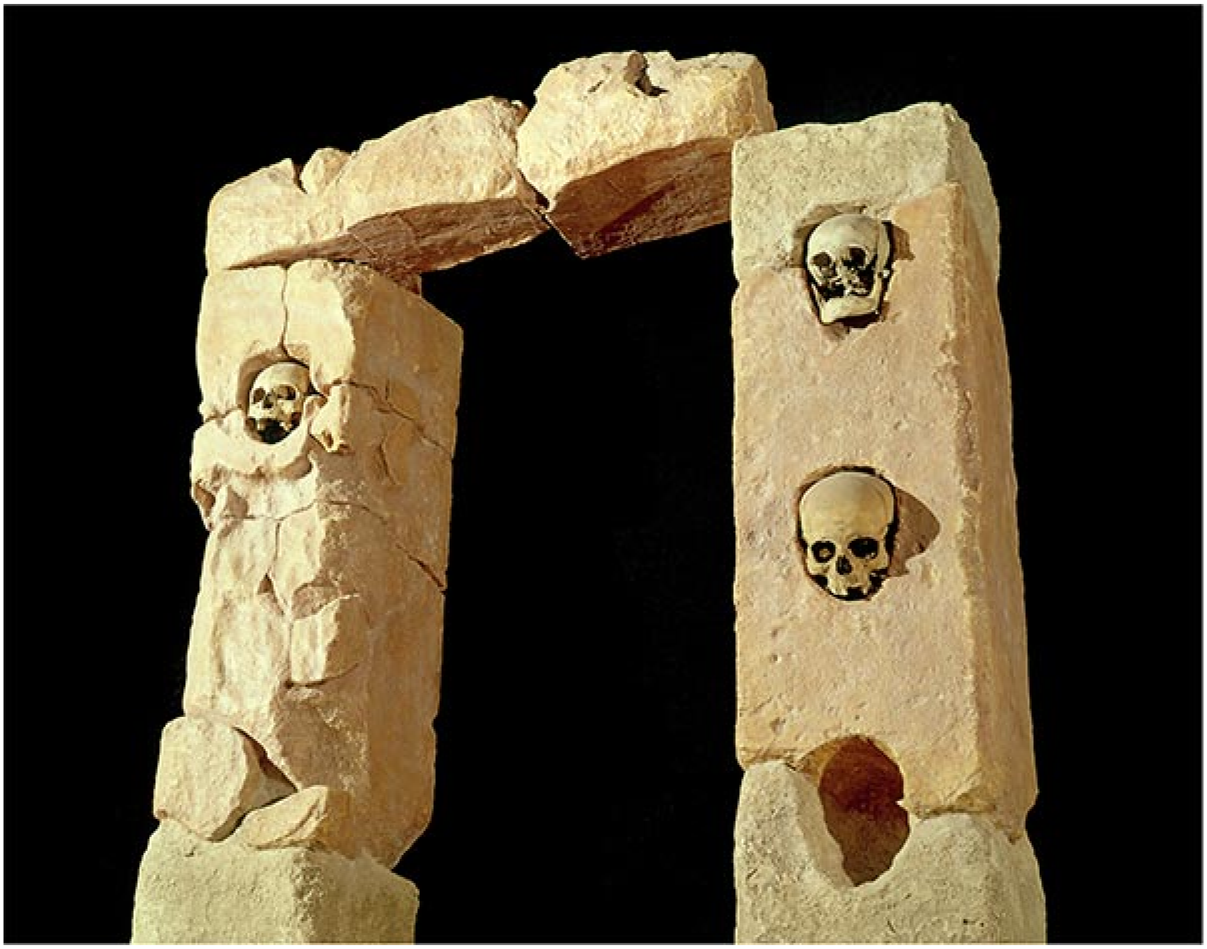
The evidence from Gournay-sur-Aronde and Vendeuil-Caply, only 30 kilometres apart, shows that in this region of Belgic Gaul, from the fourth century until the beginning of the first, the religious structures—pits and upright posts—were essentially open-air; the concept of a regular roofed structure was a first-century BC development. A similar open-air sanctuary dating to the third century BC was discovered at Libenice in Bohemia. Here the temenos was created by a continuous ditch defining an elongated rectangular area at one end of which a standing stone and two large post-holes provided the ritual focus. The possibility that the posts were carved into god-like figures is suggested by the discovery of two bronze torcs, found nearby, which might have been worn by the wooden images. A series of pits, dug one at a time and then refilled, seems to have been associated with successive libations, while deposits of animal bones and the burial of a female indicate the variety of sacrifices offered.



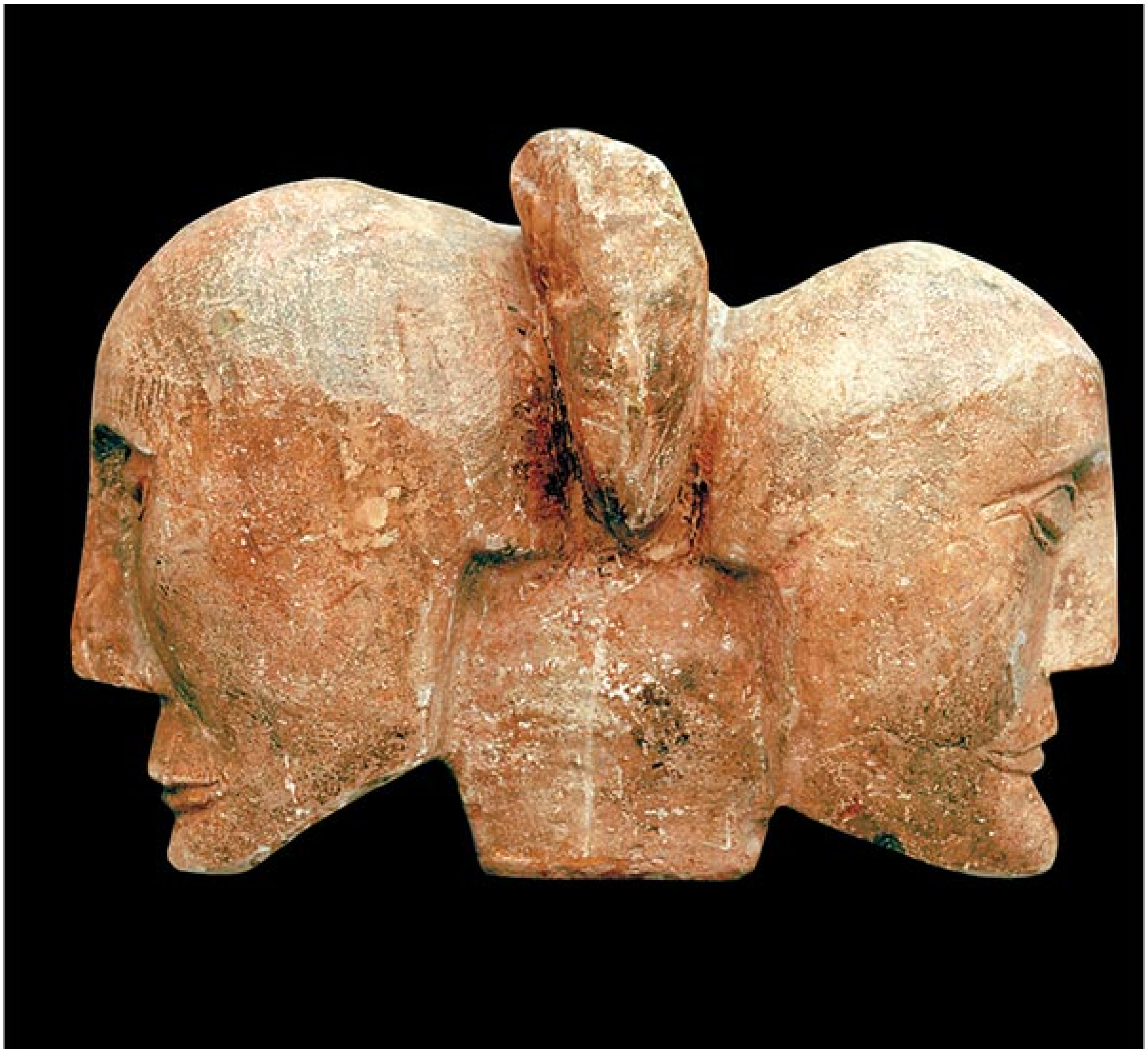
11.15 (*Top left*) Stone sculpture of a seated figure from the sanctuary of Roquepertuse, Bouches-du-Rhône, France. Third or second century BC. Musée d'archéologie méditerranéenne, Marseilles.



11.16 (*Top right*) Frieze simply carved with a row of horses' heads from the sanctuary of Roquepertuse. Traces of paint remain. Third or second century BC. Musée d'archéologie méditerranéenne, Marseilles.



11.17 (*Bottom*) The portico of the sanctuary at Roquepertuse, dating to the third or second century BC. The niches in the columns were deliberately carved to hold severed heads. Musée d’archéologie méditerranéenne, Marseilles.

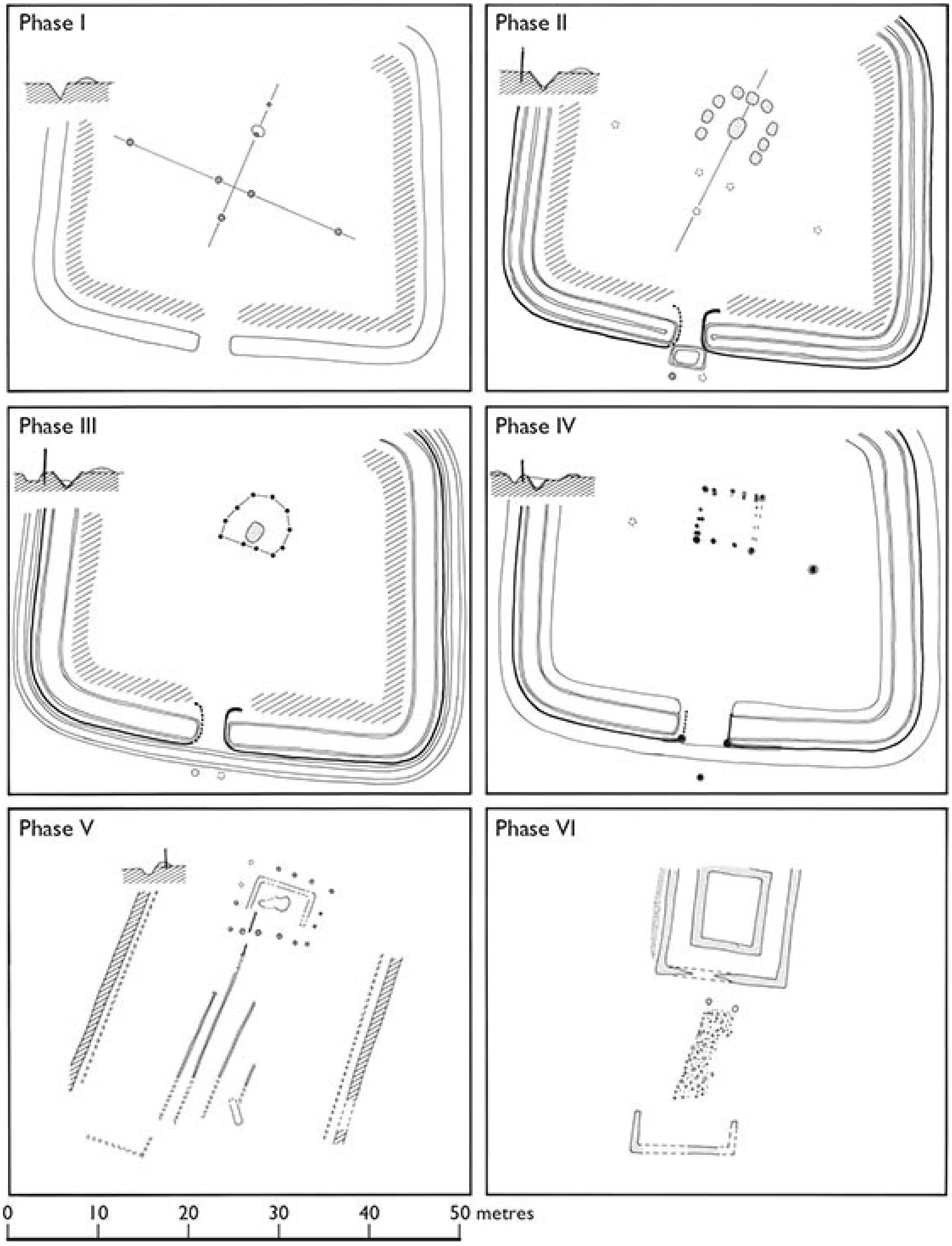


11.18 (*Above left*) A pair of limestone heads wearing a ‘leaf crown’ found at the sanctuary of Roquepertuse, together with a range of religious sculpture dating to the third or second century BC. Musée d’archéologie méditerranéenne, Marseilles.

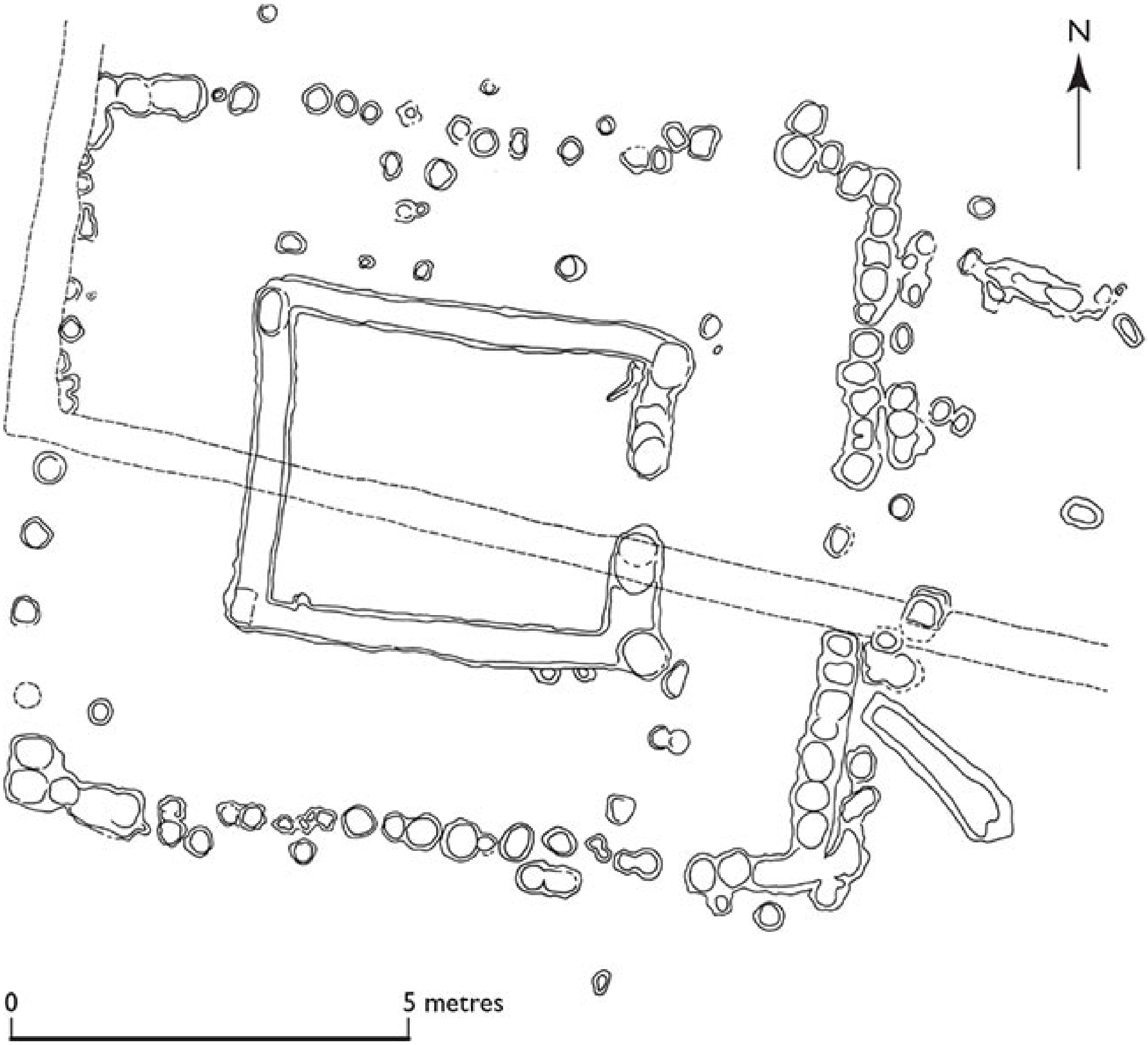
11.19 (*Above right*) Bronze statue of a seated deity from Bouray-sur-Juine, Essonne, France. The figure has hoofed feet like a deer and wears a neck torc; the eyes were of glass paste. First century BC–first century AD. Musée d'archéologie nationale, Saint-Germain-en-Laye, Paris.

The evidence from Britain differs only in that rectangular buildings appear before the first century. The best known is the rectangular *cella* with its post-built ambulatory found at Heathrow (Middlesex) within a rectangular enclosure. Other examples of rectangular- or square-built structures have been found in the hillforts of Danebury (Hampshire) and South Cadbury (Somerset) and at Lancing Down (Sussex). All are thought to have served as shrines during the British Middle Iron Age (*c*.300–100 BC).

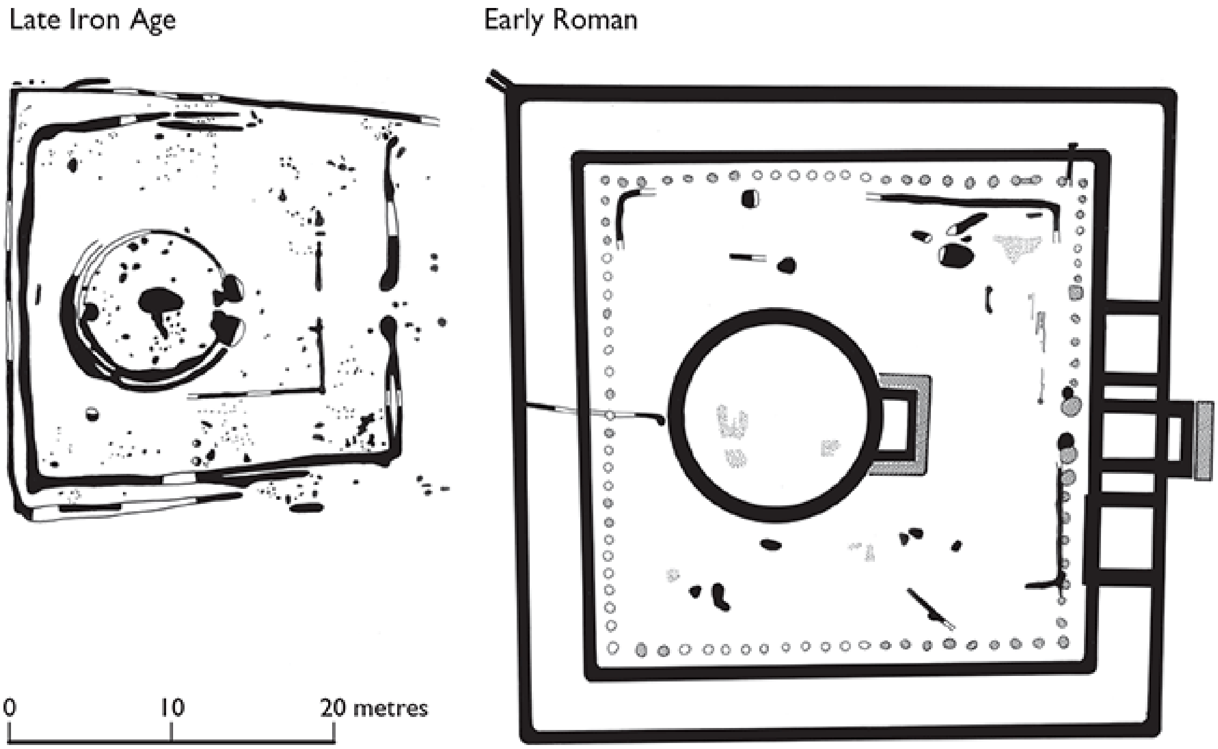
Another feature of the British evidence is the prevalence of circular temples like the first-century BC structure found on Hayling Island. It was a large building 15 metres in diameter set within a rectangular ditched enclosure. The entire structure was rebuilt in stone in the late first century AD, after the Roman invasion. A circular shrine, this time built with dry-stone wall footings, was found in the centre of the hillfort of Maiden Castle (Dorset). This, too, was replaced in masonry in the Roman period. Although circular shrines of the Iron Age are not yet known in Continental Europe, circular Gallo-Roman temples suggest that earlier prototypes may once have existed.


Phase I
Phase II
Phase III
Phase IV
Phase V
Phase VI
0
10
20
30
40
50 metres

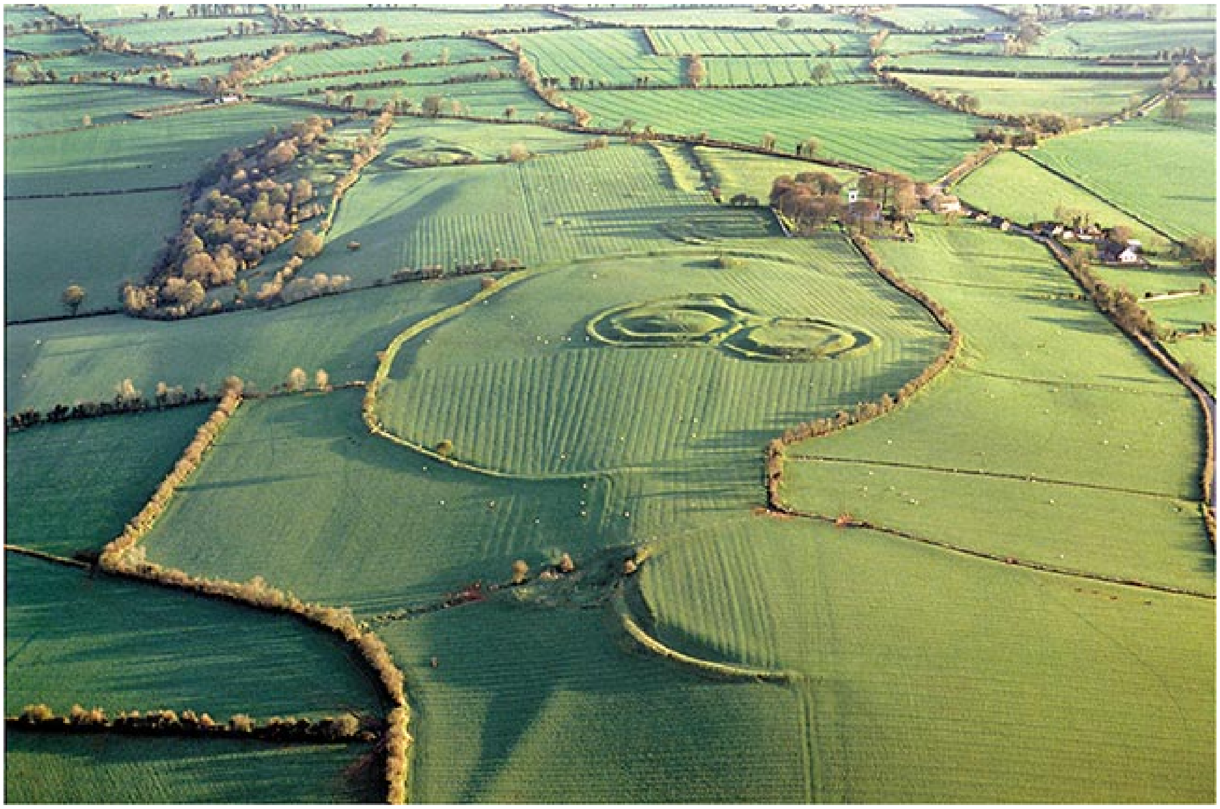
11.20 The temple site excavated at Gournay, Picardy, France, remained in use over a considerable period, for much of the time focused around a ritual pit. The ditch, created in Period II, formed the receptacle for extensive ritual depositions comprising weapons and animals. The sanctity of the site was still recognized in the Roman period, when during Period VI a typical Romano-Celtic temple was built in masonry.



11.21 (*Opposite top*) A rectangular ditched enclosure excavated at Heathrow Airport, Middlesex, England, in 1944, was found to contain a rectangular timber building with an ‘ambulatory’ around it. The plan is highly reminiscent of later Romano-Celtic temples. The date would appear to be Middle or Late Iron Age.


Late Iron Age
Early Roman
0
10
20 metres

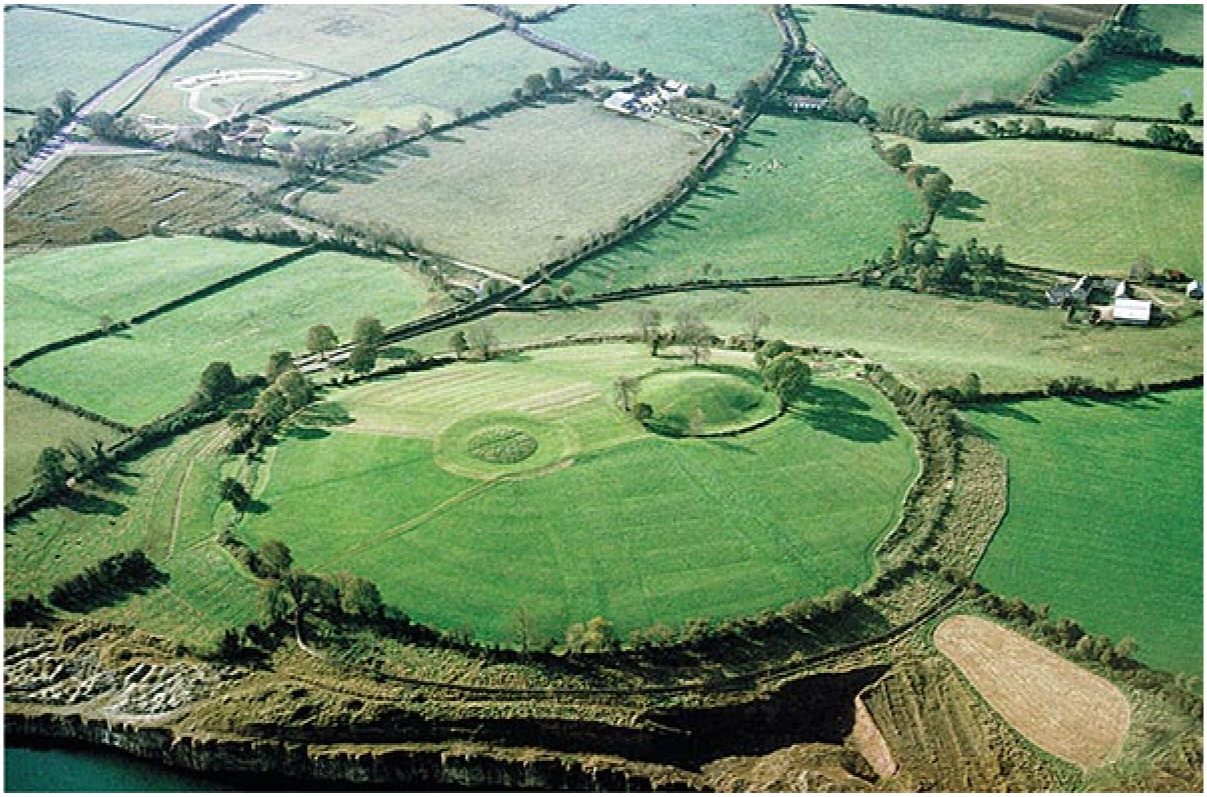
11.22 (*Opposite bottom*) The temple at Hayling Island, Hampshire, England, in use from the first century BC, was rebuilt in masonry by the Romans in the late first century AD, the Roman structure reproducing the form of its predecessor.



11.23 Aerial view of the sacred site of Tara, Co. Meath, Ireland. The large enclosure, the *Rath na Ríogh*, contains a number of monuments, the most prominent being two smaller enclosures and a Bronze Age burial mound—the Mound of the Hostages. Beyond the enclosure, close to the church, is the Rath of the Synods, which was in use during the first century AD; the parallel banks beyond are known as the Banqueting Hall. Tara was important in early Irish history as the place where kingship was legitimized.

In Ireland, circularity was the prime characteristic of religious sites. Four great ritual centres are known from the vernacular literature and all have been identified on the ground as surviving complexes of earthworks: Tara (Meath), Cruachain (Connacht), Dún Ailinne (Co. Kildare), and Emain Macha, or Navan Fort (Co. Armagh). All were associated with rites of kingship in the early historic period, but Tara was pre-eminent.

The complex of Emain Macha is best known archaeologically. The focal point is an oval enclosure of 5 hectares set within a ritual landscape which included a natural lake, from which four bronze horns and a number of human skulls were recovered, and an artificial pool known as the King's Stables, which appears to have been dug for ritual purposes *c.*800 BC. The enclosure itself contained two prominent circular monuments. One was a ploughed-out ring barrow; the other survived as a mound 50 metres in diameter and 6 metres high. Excavation showed it to be a complex structure. The earliest occupation beneath the mound comprised a series of circular buildings associated with prestige goods dating from *c.*700–100 BC: the assemblage included the skull and jaw of a Barbary ape from the Mediterranean which arrived either in captivity as a living beast or, less dramatically, as a preserved severed head.



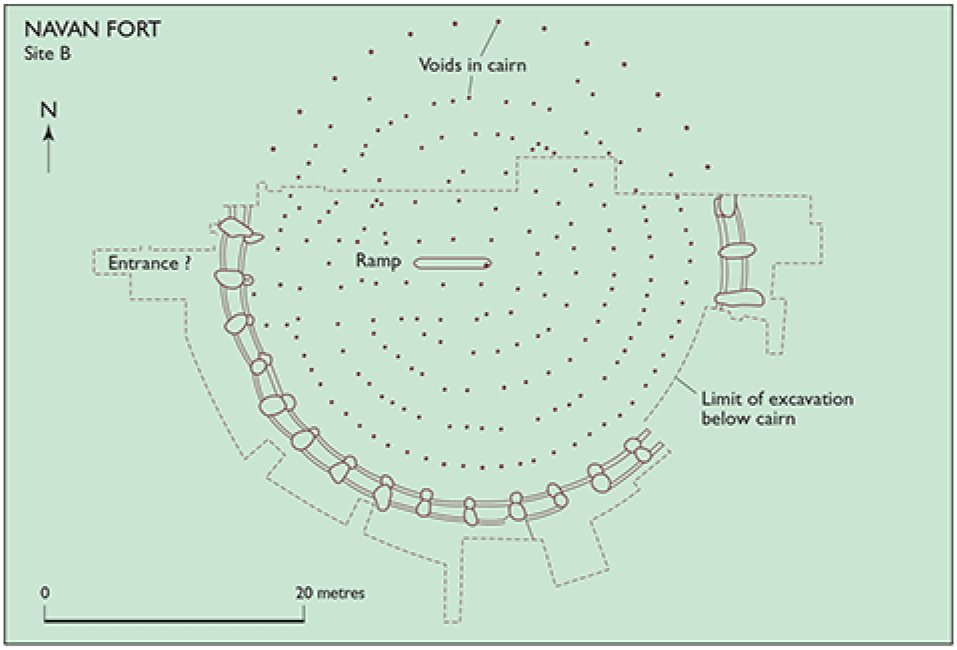
11.24 Aerial view of Navan Fort in Co. Armagh, Northern Ireland. Navan is the *Emain Macha* of the Irish epics. The crest of the hill was occupied by a remarkable timber structure 40 metres in diameter built around a single oak felled in 94 BC. The structure was embedded in a cairn of stones and the exposed parts set on fire. (See Fig. 11.25.)

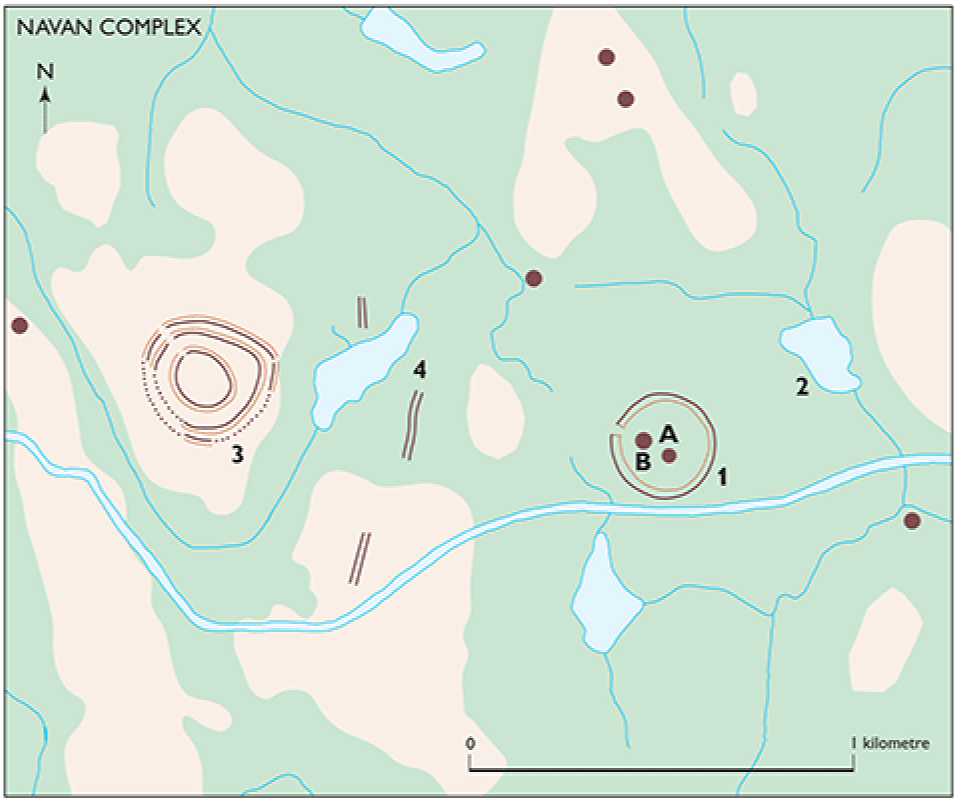
In 94 BC (a precise date based on the dendrochronological evidence) an oak tree was felled and set up as the centre post of a massive circular structure nearly 40 metres in diameter composed of six concentric settings of posts, some 275 timbers in all, arranged in radial sets in a manner suggestive of a structure designed to be roofed. No evidence of internal activity was found since the floor was kept clean. The standing structure was then embedded in a stone cairn piled up inside to a maximum height of 2.5 metres, and that part of the building which projected above the cairn was set on fire. After the conflagration the cairn was covered by a mound of cut turves, raising the height by a further 2.5 metres. The motivation for this remarkable sequence of events, involving the mobilization of huge social effort, defies explanation, except as a ritual act of momentous proportions.

The excavation of Dún Ailinne provided a further insight into Irish ritual sites. Here the hilltop was defined by an enclosure of 16 hectares. A succession of three substantial timber structures occupied a central position. The first was a circular palisaded enclosure 22 metres in diameter. This was replaced by a more elaborate circular structure with concentric settings of timbers which the excavator suggests supported platforms of different heights looking inwards. A smaller enclosure formed an annexe, while radiating palisades and posts created a monumental funnel-shaped approach. In the final stage concentric palisades defined a circular area 37 metres in internal diameter. Within the centre of this was a circular building 5 metres in diameter surrounded by a setting of massive free-standing timbers probably 3–4 metres in height. After a period, during which there was intensive burning near some of the posts, the entire structure was dismantled. Subsequent use suggests that the site was given over to periodic, perhaps seasonal, meetings involving feasting. The dating evidence shows that the sequence spanned the period from the third century BC to the second or third century AD.

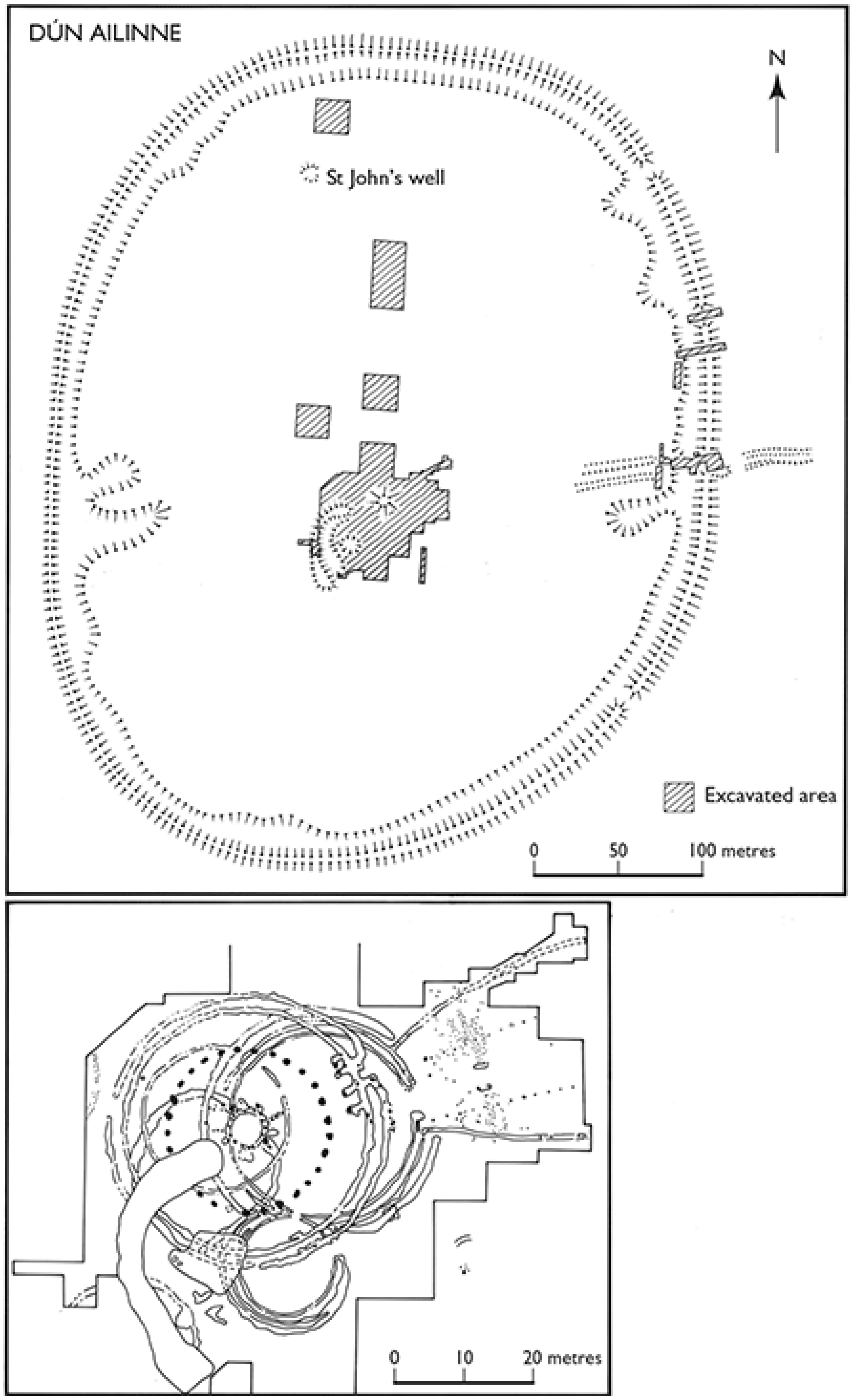
The size and form of the structures at Dún Ailinne leave little doubt that the site served a centralizing ritual function. It is possible that the creation of the mound at Emain Macha and the demolition of the final structure at Dún Ailinne were broadly contemporary and mark a significant change in the ritual use of these sites.

The monumentality of the Irish religious sites sets them apart from their British and Continental European counterparts. The huge timber structures, and the enclosing earthworks which invariably have the banks outside the ditches, are features which hark back to Neolithic and Early Bronze Age times and provide a firm reminder of the strength of indigenous traditions in more remote areas of the Atlantic fringe.


NAVAN FORT
Site B
N
Voids in cairn
Entrance ?
Ramp
Limit of excavation
below cairn
0
20 metres


NAVAN COMPLEX
N
3
4
2
A
B
1
0
1 kilometre

11.25 (*Opposite*) The map shows the ritual landscape dominated by the enclosure known as Navan Fort (1), overlooking the lake of Loughnashade (2), where four large bronze horns and a number of human skulls were found. Other sites are Haughey's Fort (3), and an artificial pond known as the King's Stables (4), which produced finds of Late Bronze Age date. Other archaeological sites are shown as brown spots. The detailed plan (*top*) shows the massive timber structure dating to 94 BC found under mound B within the fort.


DÚN AILINNE
N
St John's well
Excavated area
0
50
100 metres
0
10
20 metres

11.26 Dún Ailinne, Co. Kildare, Ireland, was one of the ritual centres mentioned in Irish vernacular literature. The centre was occupied by a complex of timber buildings.

In this context it is worth recalling the carved stelae—standing stones—of Armorica, which occur in columnar and hemispherical forms throughout the Breton countryside (above, pp. 170–3). That they were regarded as religiously powerful is demonstrated by the Christianization which many of them suffered by having Christian symbols, usually the cross, carved on them or by being moved bodily into the precincts of a church. These Iron Age stelae clearly belong to a belief system which can be traced back to the standing stones of the megalithic period.

Some echo of the outlandish rites of distant lands is provided by Poseidonius' anecdotal tale (quoted by Strabo) of an island lying off the mouth of the Loire occupied only by women 'possessed by Dionysus'. Once a year they removed the roof of their temple and replaced it with a new roof within the day. During this ceremony one of the women was chosen for sacrifice. She was 'torn to pieces by the others, and they carry the body parts around the temple crying out "(euoi)" and they do not cease until their madness has passed away' (Strabo, *Hist.* 4. 4. 6). Presumably this behaviour was judged to be sufficiently unusual for Poseidonius to have mentioned it.

Sufficient will have been said to indicate that built temples existed throughout the Celtic world. The archaeological evidence adds firm support to the references about religious structures given by the classical writers. When Diodorus Siculus writes of 'temples and sanctuaries' and Plutarch tells us that Caesar's sword was hung up in a temple of the Arverni, they were presumably referring to the quite sophisticated timber structures of the type represented at Gournay, the sanctity of which was remembered by the community for many centuries.

Attitudes to Death

The archaeological evidence derived from the excavation of cemeteries is sufficient to suggest that a belief in the afterlife may have persisted throughout much of the Celtic world. Caesar makes the matter explicit by reporting that the Druids attached particular importance to the belief that after death the soul passes from one body to another. In this he, like other commentators, is probably following Poseidonius, and rationalizes the observation by supposing that the doctrine was favoured because it made the warrior fearless in battle.

The burial tradition most widely practised in Continental Europe from the seventh to the first centuries BC was inhumation, the dead person being provided with the equipment appropriate to his or her status as perceived by the lineage responsible for burial. This qualification is necessary to remind us that the burial rite, at least of the elite, was an occasion for the lineage publicly to display its prestige to the assembled company. Rich burials, like those of the West Hallstatt chiefdoms and their La Tène successors in the fifth century, and those of the northern Celtic zone in the first century BC and early first century AD, reflect societies in which command of prestige goods was considered to be an attribute of status. For most of the period from the beginning of the fourth century to the end of the second, status was expressed in terms of warrior equipment reflecting a rather different set of values.

The change to cremation, which becomes evident in much of Celtic Europe late in the second or early in the first century BC, implies a significant shift in belief, though it is not apparent what caused it. It may be little more than the resurgence of a long-established view of the spirit being released into the sky. An alternative possibility is that the custom was an emulation of Roman practice. The move to cremation, together with the formalization of temple buildings and the development of *oppida*, may best be seen as part of the package of changes which spread through much of the Celtic world in the last decades of the second century BC.

That much of the British Isles adhered to a somewhat different belief system is suggested by the virtual absence of evidence for burial over much of the country before the beginning of the first century BC, with the exception of the cemeteries of the Arras culture in Yorkshire and the cist burials of the south-west peninsula. The simplest explanation for this is that the normal method for dealing with the dead body was excarnation—that is, the exposing of the body in an area set aside for the purpose. The bones would either be left there in the open or selectively brought back to the settlement for curation or use in other rituals. Some such explanation accounts both for the absence of evidence for regular interments and cremations and for the presence of human bones in settlement contexts. Excarnation may have been widely practised in other parts of Europe alongside normative rites, but its extent is difficult to assess.

The curation of human remains is dramatically reflected in the Celtic attitude to the head. Diodorus Siculus, presumably quoting Poseidonius, offers the standard disapproving view seen through classical eyes:

> They cut off the heads of enemies slain in battle and attach them to the necks of their horses. These blood-stained spoils they hand over to their attendants and carry off as booty, while striking up a paean and singing a song of victory, and they nail up these first fruits upon their houses just as do those who lay low wild animals in certain kinds of hunting. They embalm in cedar-oil the heads of the most distinguished enemies and preserve them carefully in a chest and display them with pride to strangers, saying that for this head, one of their ancestors, or his father or the man himself, refused the offer of a large sum of money.
>
> (*Hist.* 5. 29)

In comparing the human head taken in battle with that of wild animals caught in the chase, Diodorus demeans the Celtic practice, whether by ignorance or design. But behind the second part of the quotation one can discern something of the importance of the head in Celtic society: to own and to display a distinguished head was to retain and control the power of the dead person, which was part of the inheritance of the lineage. Refusal to part with such a trophy is understandable in that it would diminish the holder’s power. Behind this might also lurk the belief that the head, once freed from its captor or his successor, would be able to work against them.

Reverence for the power of the head lies behind the story told by Livy of the battle between the Boii and the Romans during which the Roman consul Postumus was killed. His body was carried to the most prestigious temple of the tribe and there decapitated, the skull being cleaned and mounted with gold to serve as a cup for use in the deity’s honour. Evidently the skull of such a distinguished enemy was a gift appropriate to a god. It is in this context that the skulls found in the Celto-Ligurian sanctuaries are probably best interpreted. Their power added to that of the god and was prevented from working against those who brought about the death. Behind what the Greek and Roman writers saw as a caricature of Celtic barbarism lay a complex pattern of values and beliefs.

That the Celts were, in Caesar’s words, extremely superstitious seems fair comment. The gods, in their various guises, were everywhere and controlled everything. They could communicate with humans through augury and could be cajoled or persuaded by sacrifice, but no contact was possible except through the mediation of a trained practitioner—a Druid. Stated in these simple terms, Celtic religion was much like any other in its basic form. It is only in its vibrant mythology, still resonant in the Irish vernacular literature, that the rich complexity of the inherited lore can be glimpsed.

12

The Developed Celtic World

THE migratory movements which began towards the end of the fifth century BC were largely, but not entirely, over by the beginning of the second century, by which time the immense energy previously spent on conquest and raiding was being turned to more productive activities. The result was that throughout the Celtic world intensification in production and exchange becomes evident on an unprecedented scale. The reasons for these changes are complex, and their pace and trajectory differed from place to place and over time, yet the generalization holds good for a vast territory from the Middle Danube to south-eastern England and from northern Iberia to Bohemia. In attempting to tease out the causal threads running through these developments we must begin by considering the impact of the extension of Roman influence, both direct and indirect, on the communities around the Mediterranean core.

Rome survived the threat of the Second Punic War (218–202 BC) and in the aftermath embarked on the first significant stage of its territorial expansion. On all fronts—in Iberia, southern Gaul, the Po valley, Illyria, and Asia Minor—Rome confronted Celtic peoples. While the pace and nature of the interactions varied, the barbarian periphery cannot fail to have undergone some change as a consequence of contact with the energetically expanding economy of the Mediterranean. These factors, together with the internally generated social dynamics of the different Celtic communities, led to the emergence of societies very different from those existing at the height of the migration period.

The Extension of Roman Power: 200–60 BC

The Second Punic War was a turning-point in Rome's relations with the wider world. Before the war began, Rome's interests were focused on peninsular Italy and the seas around, the command of which required the control of the islands to the west and the coasts of Illyria to the east. The conflict with Carthage totally changed the perspective. As a result of Hannibal's energetic campaigns, Rome was led to appreciate the strategic importance of controlling the Po valley; her armies were actively involved in the south-east of the Iberian peninsula, and to reach it were regularly using the land route through Provence and Languedoc; while in the east, in the Balkans and Asia Minor, the potential dangers of political instability there were fast becoming apparent. To maintain and develop the Italian core it was becoming necessary to control a much larger periphery.

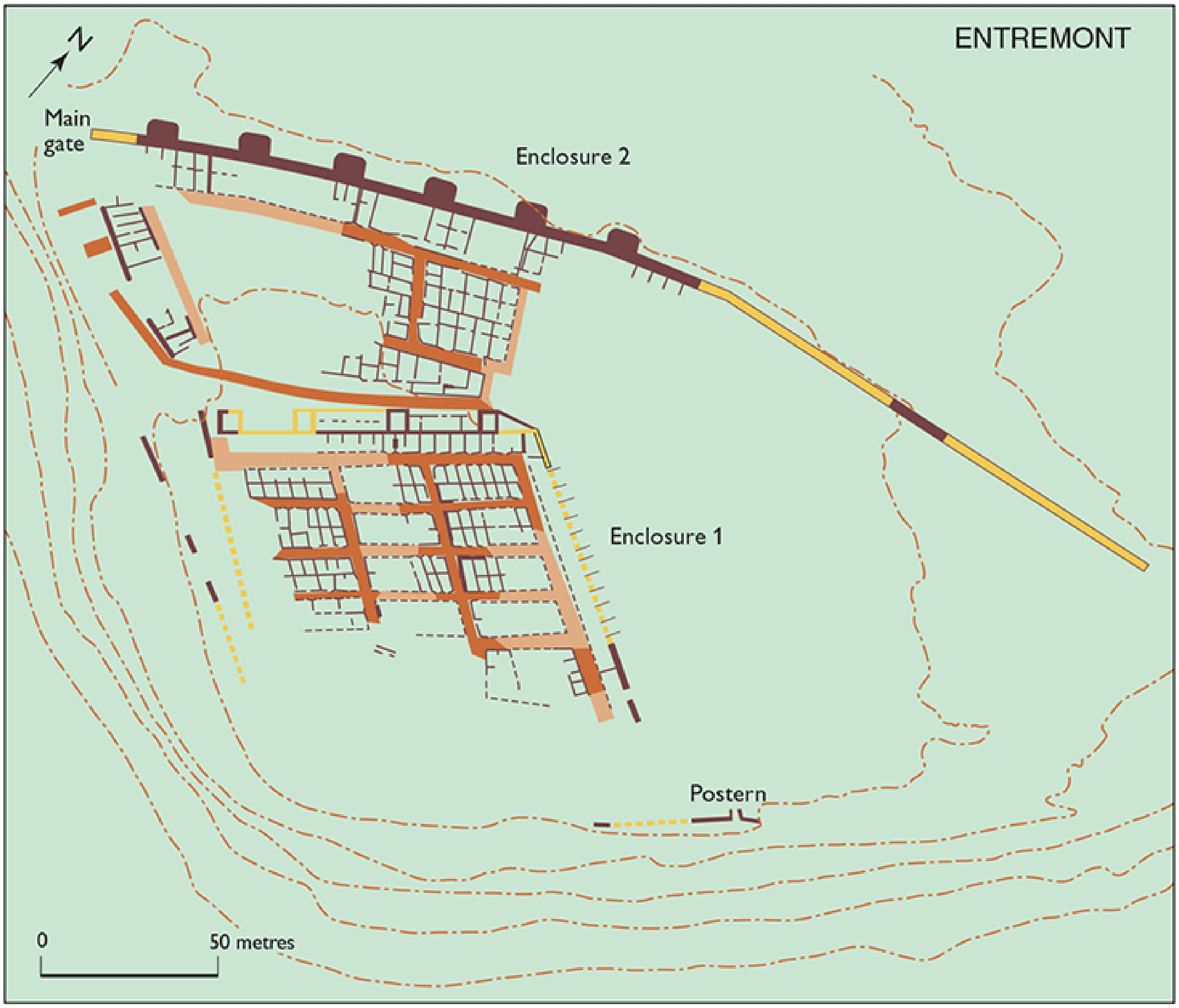
This was not just for reasons of military security. Active campaigning in distant territories provided a context for young men to gain experience and to advance in the Roman social system. Indeed there are interesting comparisons to be made between the importance of the raid in maintaining social hierarchies in the Celtic world and overseas campaigns in providing the aspiring Roman with a context in which to progress his career through a display of military excellence. Nor should the economic importance of overseas territories to Rome's development be underestimated. New territorial gains could yield raw materials and slaves in desirable quantities. For example, huge amounts of gold, silver, and copper were extracted from Iberia in the six years following the destruction of Carthaginian power, and Caesar's campaigns in Gaul are estimated to have provided a million slaves, most of them destined for the Roman markets. The other great advantage of overseas territories was that they could provide markets for surpluses produced on the estates of the Roman aristocracy. The quantity of north Italian wine offloaded in Gaulish markets in the early first century BC is thought to have been in the order of 100,000 hectolitres a year. Interactions on this scale could have had an effect on native communities in the areas peripheral to Roman activity.

Roman expansion into the Po valley was rapid after the defeat of Hannibal. Traditional fear of the Celts, intensified by an awareness of the weakness of Rome's northern borders and the value to an enemy of the large pool of willing mercenaries provided by Cisalpine Celtic settlements, focused Rome's attention on the need for rapid conquest of the entire Po valley. A series of determined campaigns ensued. In 197 BC the Cenomani were defeated at the river Mincio and forced into a treaty of friendship, and the next year the Insubres were overcome at Como. In a later rebellion, aided by the Boii, the Insubres were again unsuccessful, and in 194 the Boii were finally subdued, as the result of which many of them retreated northwards back into Transalpine Europe. During the next few years further campaigns in the west against the Ligurians and in the east against the Carni extended Rome's power to the southern fringes of the Alps. By the end of the 180s BC the process of Latinization was well under way and surplus native manpower was finding itself in Roman employ both as auxiliary troops and as farm workers called *accolae galli*.

The Romanization of Cisalpine Gaul meant that the routes through the Alps were now firmly under Roman control, and, with the instability of the Po valley at an end, trade could begin to develop in a more regular and organized manner. For the Alpine and Transalpine Celts the new political geography meant the beginning of a period of rapid socio-economic development.

In Iberia the capture of Cadiz in 206 BC marked the end of Carthaginian colonial involvement and the beginning of Roman influence, while the foundation of the two provinces of Hither and Further Spain in 197 BC formalized the process. For the next sixty-four years, until the capitulation of Numantia in 133, Rome was in a state of almost constant war with the native tribes on the provincial borders, most notably the Lusitani and the Celtiberians. These hostilities, and the Social War which followed in the early first century BC, part of which was fought on Spanish soil, militated against the development of significant trading systems between the native and Roman zones, and it was not until Caesar arrived in 61 BC that the west of Iberia began to be brought under Roman control. By this stage, however, even the remote north-west—the region of the Castro culture—had begun to absorb the concepts of Roman urbanism, following the expeditions into the region of Decimus Brutus in 138–136, which initiated the opening-up of the Atlantic fringes.

The long and painful wars against the native Iberians in the second century BC and the Social and Civil Wars of the first century created the need for a constant movement of men and supplies to and from the peninsula, a process intensified by the outflow of raw materials from the highly productive Spanish provinces. Although direct contact by sea was an option, the overland route through southern Gaul was preferred, especially for the movement of troops and military equipment. Thus, throughout the second and first centuries Roman convoys passed through Provence and Languedoc across the now thoroughly Hellenized coastal zone. The needs of the military quartermaster and the entrepreneurial activities of civilians travelling with the armies opened up the region to Roman commerce. So it was that the Celto-Ligurian inhabitants absorbed many aspects of Roman culture and the occupants of the hillforts of Ensérune, Entremont, and Nages began to adopt Roman styles of architecture and urban planning.



12.1 The hilltop town of Entremont, Bouches-du-Rhône, France, was the capital of the Saluvii, who occupied the territory in the region of Aix-en-Provence. The town was defended by a stone wall with bastions which derives its inspiration from the Greek city walls of the southern French coast. Entremont was destroyed by the Romans in 123 BC.

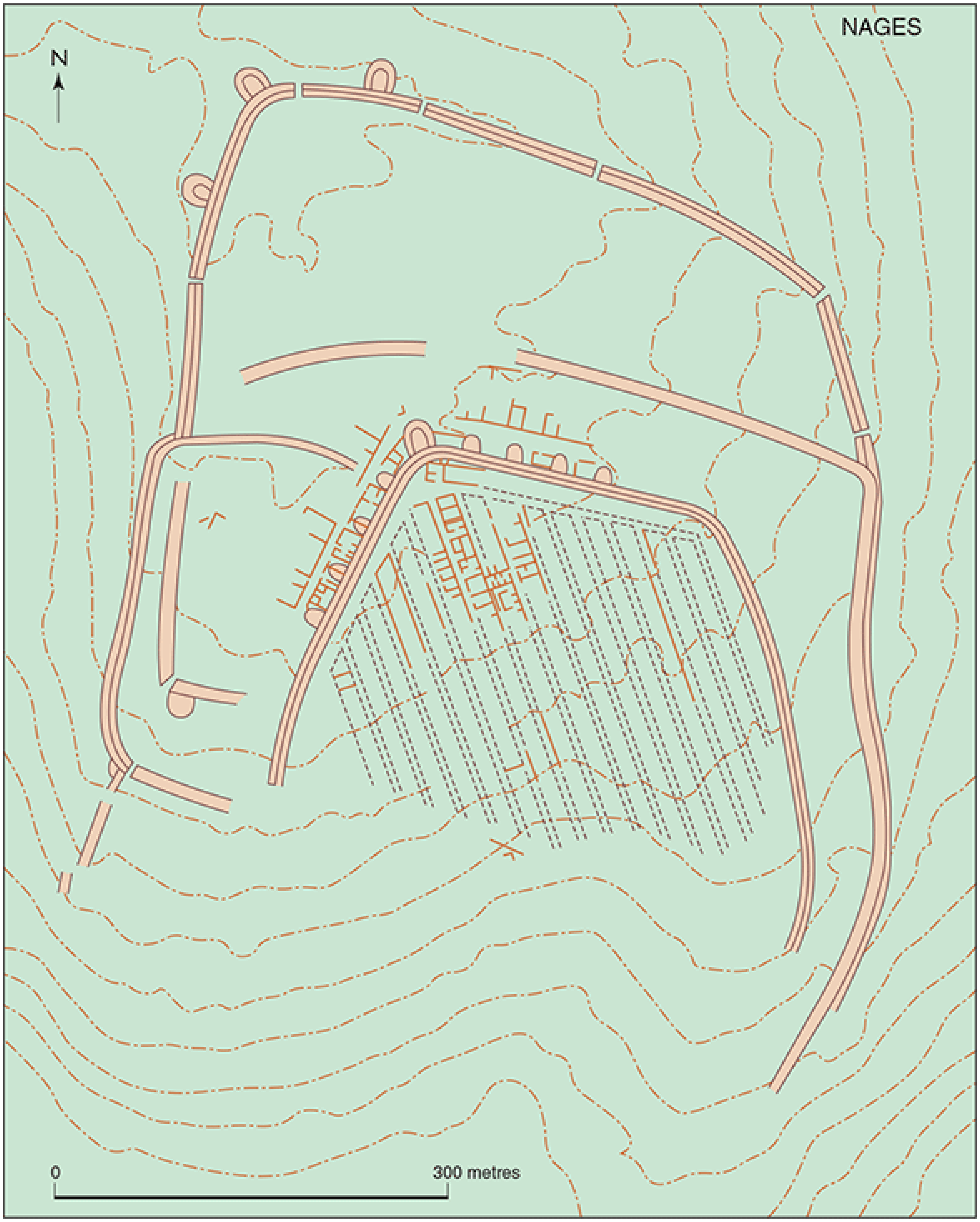
In crossing southern Gaul the Roman entrepreneurs will have become increasingly conscious of the two great axes of trade—the Rhône route to the north and the Aude–Carcassonne Gap–Garonne route leading west to the Atlantic. The large native settlements at Tolosa (Toulouse) on the Garonne and Vienna (Vienne) on the Rhône soon became known by the more adventurous Roman entrepreneurs.

The mutual interdependence of the native and Roman systems worked well, until increasingly serious raids mounted by the tribes of the Maritime Alps and Lower Rhône valley against Roman convoys and Greek cities alike led, in 123 BC, to the annexation of the entire coastal zone and later the establishment of the province of Transalpina.

12.2 The *oppidum* of Entremont was defended with stone walls and bastions based on Greek models. The urban layout within was carefully planned. Fourth to late second centuries BC.

Thus, while in Iberia Celtic-speaking peoples were still locked in a seemingly interminable conflict with the Roman armies, the early second century BC saw the establishment of an interface between the Roman and the Celtic worlds stretching from the Adriatic to the Pyrenees. Along the 1,100 kilometres of this cultural frontier social and economic interactions developed, increasing in intensity as the Italian economy became more and more dependent on the periphery.

In eastern Europe the situation was different. The mountains of the Balkans formed an effective barrier between the Adriatic and the Middle Danube regions, sheltering the Celtic communities from Roman interference, apart from brief campaigns against brigands in the Upper Sava valley between 156 and 129 BC. In the Lower Danube valley the Thracians acted as a buffer against the expansion of Roman interest which was developing in Greece and Macedonia, until the middle of the first century AD, when Thrace finally became a Roman province.



12.3 The native *oppidum* of Nages, Gard, France, was defended by stone walls with bastions reminiscent of Greek defensive architecture. The regular layout of the parallel streets is a characteristic of Greek urban planning, which can only have been learned from the Greek cities of the coastal zone. Third to first centuries BC.

The situation in Galatia was different yet again. Here, as we have seen, the Galatian state remained independent and, to a large extent, isolated, even after its decisive defeat by the Romans in 189 BC. Following the massacre of the tetrarchs by Mithridates IV in 88 BC, the Galatians were drawn increasingly into the Roman sphere until their territory was annexed by Pompey in 67 BC. During the century or more of contact between the two peoples there is little evidence of significant acculturation, but the dependence which developed between the later Galatian leaders and the Roman authorities implies a close political relationship at least by the first century BC.

The Roman Economy and the Celtic World

During the second century BC the Roman economy was undergoing major transformations. The reasons were various and complex. One of the principal factors was the need to maintain substantial citizen armies to forward Roman interests abroad. This meant that men who would otherwise be engaged in rural activities were required to spend long periods away from home and were therefore unable to work the land. For many of those who survived and returned home, farm work offered little attraction. These factors encouraged a gradual drift to the cities, and in particular Rome, leaving farms abandoned and land uncultivated. As the urban proletariat grew, so the smallholdings were bought up and gradually amalgamated into estates of increasing size. By the end of the second century large tracts of land were held by comparatively few owners. One of the reasons for the growth of big estates, in addition to the availability of cheap land, was that for the senatorial class land provided a convenient and socially acceptable form of investment. To be involved directly in the trading of commodities was not considered to be a proper pursuit for a man of status, though in all probability many ignored or circumvented the convention. To own land, on the other hand, was desirable. The extent of a person’s estate or estates was a ready indicator of prestige. More to the point, the yield provided a cash return on the money invested in the original land purchase.

The estates required large bodies of agricultural workers. With extensive rural depopulation, labour for hire was not readily available. A more certain way to fuel productivity was with slave labour. Slaves were cost-effective, not least because they could breed in captivity and the surplus could be sold. By the beginning of the first century BC the reliance of the Roman economy on slave labour was considerable. One estimate is that in the early first century BC there were 300,000 Gaulish slaves in Italy alone, a total which required to be topped up at the rate of 15,000 a year.

There is one further factor to be weighed. For the most part those estates too far from Rome to deliver fresh fruit and vegetables to the city had to rely on producing corn, oil, and wine. Of these, manufacture of wine soon became the most popular, no doubt because of ease of production and profit margin, but overproduction led to a need to develop new overseas markets.

From this brief, and greatly oversimplified, sketch, two imperatives stand out: the importance for Rome to maintain a steady flow of slaves; and the necessity to create new markets in which to dispose of surpluses not required in Italy.

While the Roman economy became increasingly dependent on slaves to fuel its productive capacity, its reliance on raw materials, and in particular gold and silver to serve as currency in the now complex economic system, also increased. Copper, tin, and high-quality iron were always in demand. Other imports listed by contemporary writers such as Strabo include hides, furs, amber, hunting dogs, and other exotic animals. These raw materials would have been sought in the newly won territories and in the barbarian hinterlands beyond. Thus from the beginning of the second century BC Rome became more and more dependent upon sources of supply lying beyond its immediate control.

Romans and the Society of the Celtic Periphery

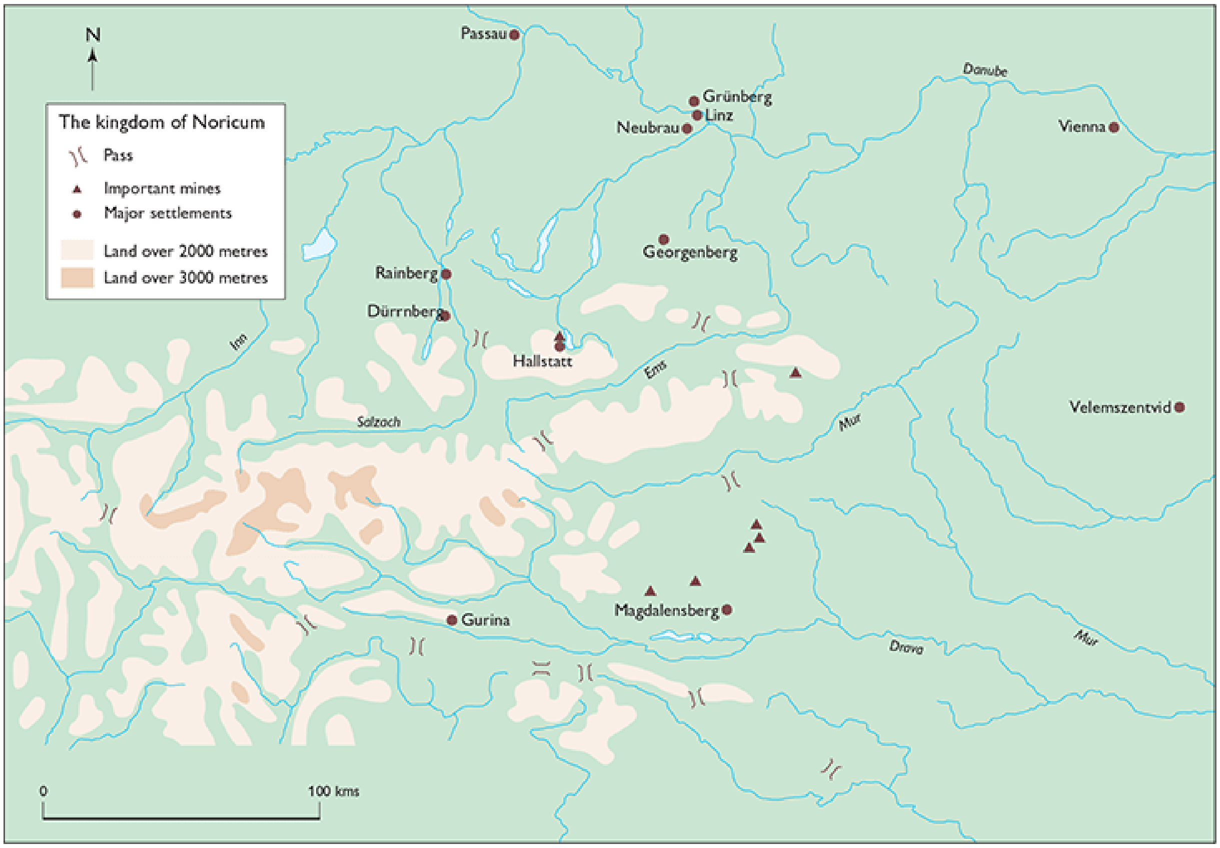
There can be little doubt that Rome’s economic needs impinged significantly upon the barbarian world, such was the energy of the Roman state. But the Celtic north was also undergoing social change, in part *sui generis*. Opportunity for raiding was now far more restricted, limited not only by the growing power of Rome in the south but also by the rise of the Dacian state in the east and the population increase now gripping the Germanic peoples of the north. New systems were evolving for the display of power among the various elites (Roman, Celtic, and German). The entourage remained important since the size of a leader’s following was seen as an indicator of his status. In earlier times, as we have argued above (pp. 155–7), the raid provided the opportunity to demonstrate leadership and the feast was the occasion for the display of status before the assembled company. But times had changed, and Poseidonius (through Strabo), in describing feasting among Celts, could assign it to ‘former times’.

What seems to have replaced this early system, at least in parts of Gaul, was a form of potlatch—a process of conspicuous giving and consumption, enacted publicly so that the company could gauge the wealth of the host and benefit from his generosity. The account which Poseidonius gives of an event staged by the Arvernian chief Louernius is informative. In a bid for status he built a large square enclosure and there stockpiled food and set up wine presses to feast all comers over a period of many days. He also drove about the countryside in his chariot scattering ‘little pieces of gold and silver’ to the horde who followed eagerly in his wake. To be able to mount such a display of largesse Louernius was evidently in command of considerable resources. Thus the control of goods and raw materials, and the facility to manipulate them to produce luxury exotics such as wine to dispense to clients, now became essential for the aspiring leader. The development of *oppida* controlling route nodes, and thus the movement of goods, is one of the more visible results of the complex socio-economic changes under way in the Celtic world.

Whether or not the ‘little pieces of gold and silver’ which Louernius threw to his followers were coins or bullion is unclear, but the development of coinage played a significant role in the new system. Gold and silver coins were used for gift exchange rather than commerce in the capitalist sense. Since they were stamped with the symbols of the issuing authority, often in the first century BC actually mentioning the king by name, the coin, however acquired, would be seen to emanate ultimately from his authority. It was part of the largesse which the leader had distributed to his people, and the current holder was therefore beholden to him for his initial generosity. The sporadic mintings of coins were, quite possibly, occasioned by the desire of the issuer to legitimize his claim to leadership.

The proximity of the Roman world introduced another new factor into the political and social dynamics of the periphery. A tribal leader could ally himself and his following with the Roman state—that is, he could become a client of Rome. In doing so he would acquire prestige and power by virtue of the protection which the Roman patron would offer. In the same context an aspiring young warrior might place himself and his fighting entourage in the hands of Rome to serve as auxiliaries in the Roman army, much as his ancestors might have been engaged in a less formal way as mercenaries by the Mediterranean powers. Knowledge of Roman fighting methods and acceptance of Roman ways would have provided another opportunity to demonstrate social superiority.

The kingdom of Noricum provides an informative example of the relationship which could develop between Celtic and Roman society. The kingdom lay in the eastern Alps in an area roughly coterminous with present-day Austria. It began as a group of loosely allied Celtic tribes but achieved a degree of unity sometime during the second century BC under the hegemony of the Nori of central eastern Carinthia. Noricum lay astride the east Alpine trading routes, but it also commanded rich supplies of iron, which were worked locally into a fine steel, well known in the Roman world as *ferrum Noricum.* Formal relations with Rome began in 186 BC and developed amicably, until the region was eventually annexed in 15 BC. Throughout this period trade had intensified and in about 70 BC a local coinage was developed in southern Noricum to serve as a medium of exchange.


N
The kingdom of Noricum
Pass
Important mines
Major settlements
Land over 2000 metres
Land over 3000 metres
Passau
Danube
Grünberg
Linz
Neubrau
Vienna
Georgenberg
Rainberg
Dürrnberg
Inn
Hallstatt
Enns
Salzach
Mur
Velemszentvid
Gurina
Magdalensberg
Drava
Mur
0
100 kms

12.4 The kingdom of Noricum in the second and first centuries BC.

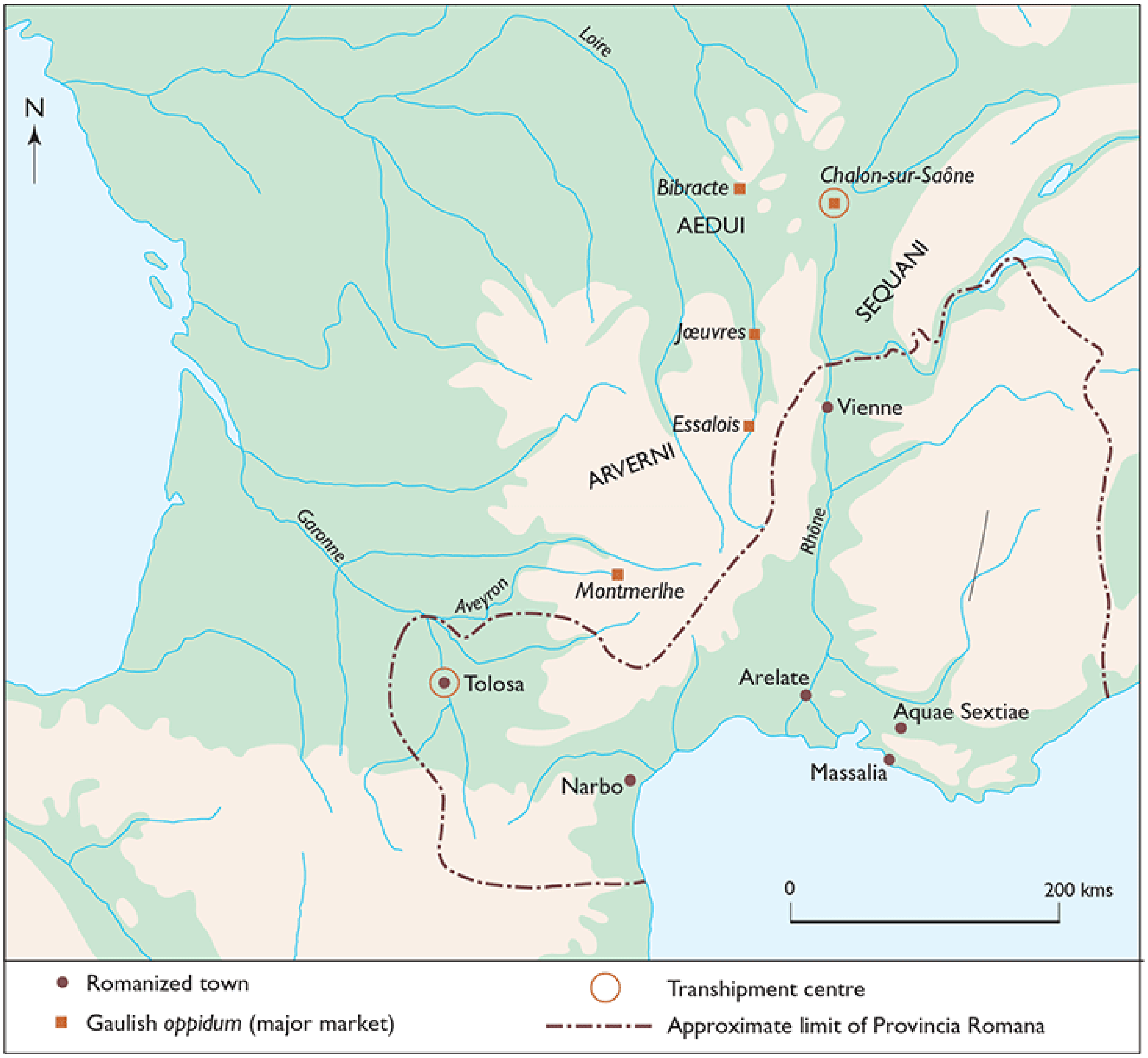
The capital of Noricum, Virunum, was located on the Magdalensberg, near Klagenfurt, close to the major route leading northwards from the Adriatic port of Aquileia. The native *oppidum* was sited on the highest point of the mountain. It was here that the royal residence was located, and the *oppidum* served as the principal administrative centre of the kingdom. Just below the native town there developed a ghetto occupied by resident Roman traders. Excavation suggests that it was established as early as the beginning of the first century BC and continued to grow. By 30 BC the lower settlement could boast a large forum and masonry-built houses constructed and decorated in purely Roman style. These were the residences of traders linked to enterprises based in Aquileia. When, in 15 BC, Drusus and Tiberius began to annex the Alpine territories, Noricum, now thoroughly Romanized, was absorbed with ease.

Roman relations with the Celtic tribes of Gaul were no less intense. The constant Roman presence in the south of the country after *c*.200 BC will have provided ample opportunity for Roman entrepreneurs to develop lucrative trading links with native communities living around the fringes of the Roman sphere of influence. At the hill town of Nages, in the Vaunage not far from Nîmes, it is possible to trace the impact of the Mediterranean world through the increasing quantities of imported pottery, both fine wares and transport vessels, found in successive stratified layers throughout the duration of the settlement’s habitation beginning about 300 BC and ending about AD 10.

One of the most desirable of the Roman imports was wine. The Celts’ love of wine was legendary in the Roman world. Diodorus Siculus (quoting Poseidonius) sums up the stereotype in a famous account:

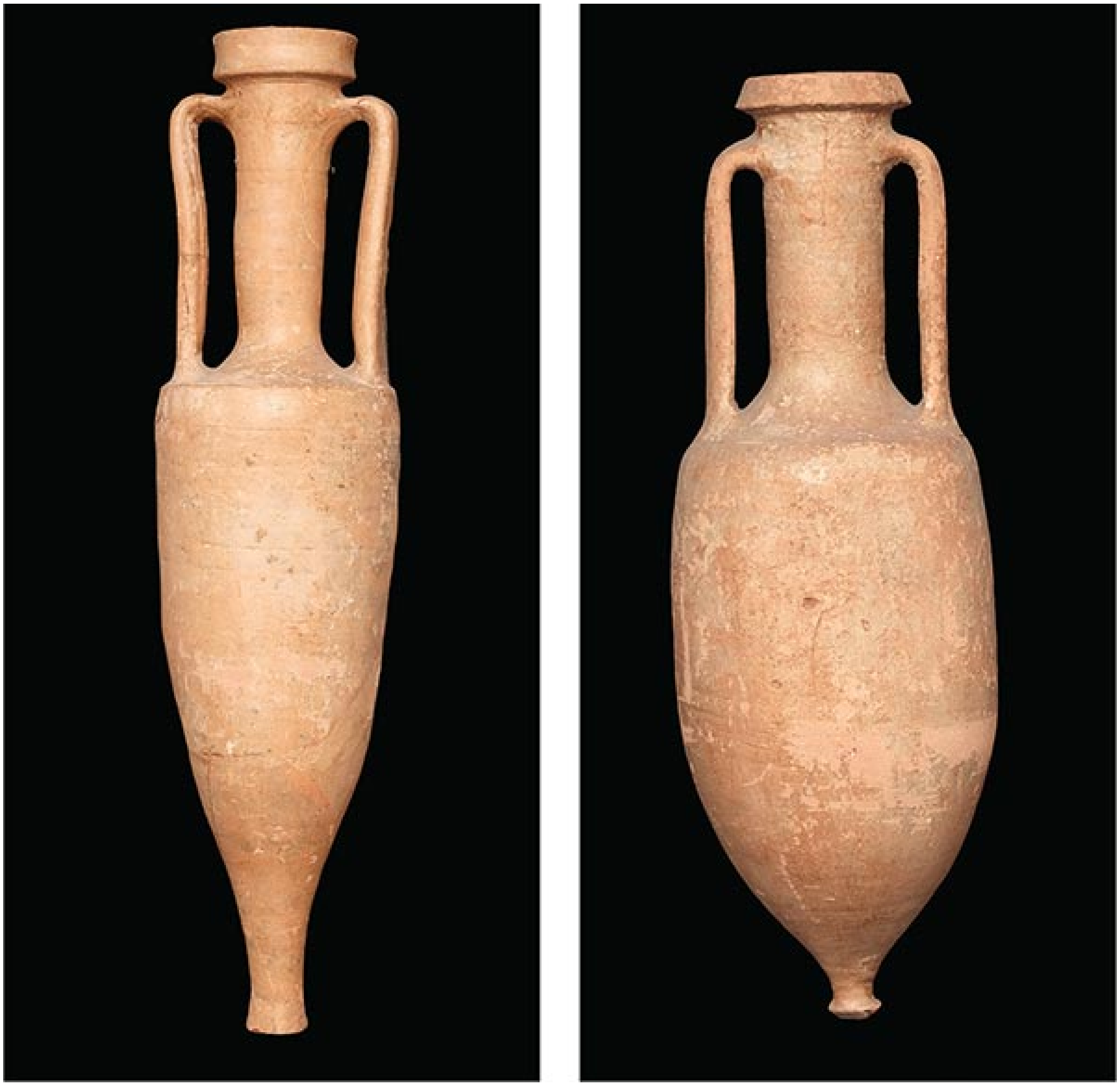
> They are extremely partial to wine and glut themselves with the unmixed wine brought in by merchants. Their desire makes them guzzle it and when they get drunk they either fall into a stupor or become manic. For this reason many Italian merchants, with their usual love of money, regard the Celtic passion for wine as a source of treasure. They transport the wine by boat on the navigable rivers and by cart through the open country and they get an incredibly good price for it: for one amphora of wine they get a slave—a servant in return for a drink!
>
> (*Hist.* 5. 26)

While it is always necessary to treat texts of this kind with caution, archaeological evidence shows that a huge volume of Roman wine was transported to Gaul in distinctive amphorae of Dressel 1 type. Two major trading ports have been identified, one near Toulouse in the Garonne valley, the other on the Saône at Cabillonum (Chalon). At Chalon, it is estimated that 24,000 amphorae were discarded in the river, while the farm land at Vieille Toulouse is still so thick with amphora sherds that even today ploughing is difficult. Both locations must have functioned as trading ports where the wine, transported by the merchants in amphorae, was decanted into other containers, either barrels or skins, for movement inland. At other sites deeper into Celtic territory the discovery of large numbers of amphorae shows that sometimes it was moved further without decanting. Several of these sites, such as Bibracte, JÅ“uvres, Essalois, and Montmerlhe, were native fortifications. To such places the Italian wine was carried by Roman merchants and there exchanged for slaves and other commodities with the local elite, who could then dispense the wine to their followers.


N
Loire
Bibracte
AEDUI
Chalon-sur-Saône
SEQUANI
Jœuvres
Vienne
Essalois
ARVERNI
Rhône
Garonne
Aveyron
Montmerlhe
Tolosa
Arelate
Aquae Sextiae
Massalia
Narbo
0
200 kms
● Romanized town
■ Gaulish *oppidum* (major market)
○ Transhipment centre
-·-·- Approximate limit of Provincia Romana

12.5 Beyond the limits of the Provincia Romana a number of Gaulish *oppida* developed as markets trading directly with the Roman world. They received, among other luxury goods, large quantities of wine imported in amphorae, the broken fragments of which still litter the ground.

The exchange rate noted by Diodorus—an amphora of wine for a slave—need not be taken too literally: it may have been little more than a neat literary flourish. But if it is an accurate record of relative values, then comparative data suggests that the Celts were getting a poor deal: in Rome the trader might expect to get the equivalent of half a dozen amphorae of wine for a healthy Gaul.



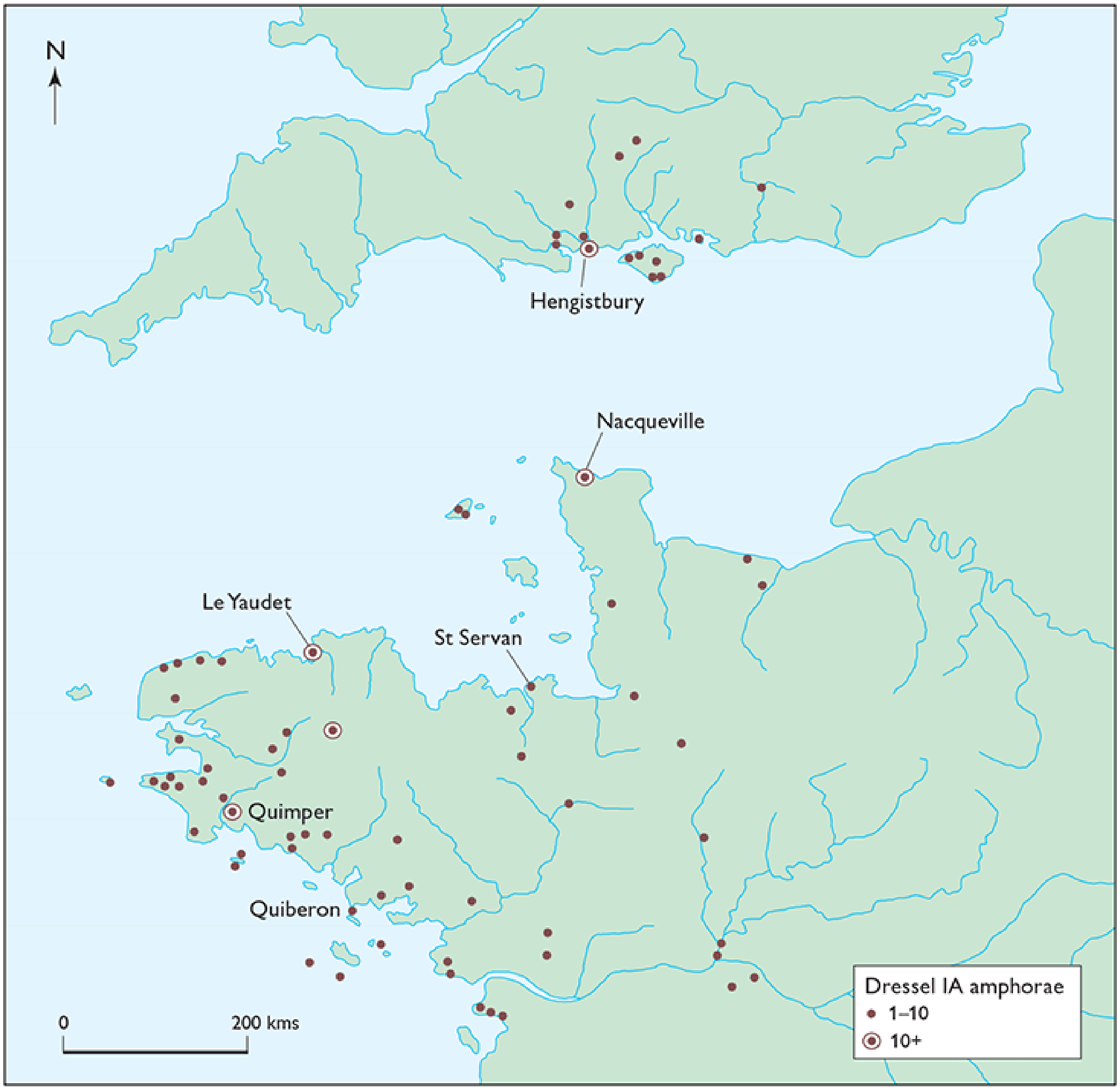
12.6 Amphorae used to transport wine provide a clear indication of trade routes. Two amphora types, Dressel 1A and Dressel 1B, both made in Italy, are particularly useful in identifying the changing patterns of commerce in the second and first centuries BC. The 1A type was in common use from the mid-second to mid-first centuries BC. The 1B type became common in the second half of the first century BC. Musée Saint-Raymond, Toulouse.

The development of the wine trade can be charted from the relative frequency of amphorae in dated archaeological contexts. In southern Gaul Italic amphorae make their appearance in small numbers about 200 BC and increase steadily throughout the second century BC, but it may well have been the annexation of southern Gaul by Rome *c*.120 BC that gave the impetus for the adventurous to seek more lucrative markets deeper inland (Map 28). The first of the distinctive Italic amphorae to be found widely in Gaul is the Dressel type 1A, the earliest known examples of which were recovered from the destruction levels at Carthage (146 BC). It is quite possible, therefore, that wine was already reaching the Gauls of the interior as early as the middle of the second century BC. Thereafter the quantities increased dramatically, reaching a peak by the middle of the first century, when Caesar's conquest created new and extended marketing opportunities.

The distribution of Dressel 1A and the later Dressel 1B amphorae provides a vivid illustration of the Roman penetration of Celtic society in the west. The navigable rivers of Gaul, as Diodorus says, provided arteries along which the wine could flow. The long-established trading route along the Aude, Garonne, and Gironde to the Atlantic seaways—the route by which tin had been brought to the Mediterranean—was evidently busy in the late second and first centuries BC. Dressel 1A amphorae have been found on wreck sites off the Breton coast and at a number of settlements in Brittany. The further extension of the route can be traced, from amphora sherds, via the Channel island of Guernsey to a major port-of-trade at Hengistbury Head on the coast of Dorset. Contemporary archaeological levels at Hengistbury have shown that other goods, including figs, raw glass, metal vessels, and unknown commodities transported in Armorican-made pots, were reaching Britain at this time. Evidence for the production and refinement of metals—iron, gold, silver, and bronze—and for the manufacture of shale bracelets provides some tangible indication of British exports. Other desirable British products mentioned by Strabo a little later—hides, corn, hunting dogs, and slaves—will have left little archaeological trace.

The evidence from Hengistbury is interesting in showing the impact which the Roman economy could have on distant communities. There is, however, no need to suppose that Roman entrepreneurs were actually sailing the Atlantic seaways. In all probability commodities were transported within the local networks of exchange, but Roman demands for specific goods may have influenced the intensity and focus of the exchanges. That the major port-of-trade on the south coast of Britain developed at Hengistbury rather than at a port in the south-west peninsula might suggest that the emphasis was more on corn and slaves than on metals. The hillfort-dominated society of central southern Britain produced corn in abundance; it was also a convenient source of slaves. It was probably for some such reason that Hengistbury became the port of call in the late second and early first centuries. It was short-lived, for after the Caesarian conquest of Gaul new systems of trade emerged (see pp. 342–4).

The head of the Adriatic provided another convenient route between the Roman world and the north. A Roman colony established at Aquileia as early as 169 BC led to the further development of an already important trading post on the route northwards. From here it was possible to travel along the eastern Alpine fringes to the Danube, in the vicinity of Sopron in north-west Hungary, and thence via the Morava valley to the far north. This was the route along which Baltic amber was carried to the Mediterranean throughout the later prehistoric period, in Roman times, and into the early Middle Ages. The importance of Sopron as a route node is amply demonstrated by the large settlement and cemetery which developed there and flourished between the fifth and first centuries BC, its function eventually being continued by the Roman town of *Scarbantia*.


N
Hengistbury
Nacqueville
Le Yaudet
St Servan
Quimper
Quiberon
0
200 kms
Dressel IA amphorae
● 1–10
◉ 10+

12.7 Distribution of Dressel 1A amphorae in north-western Gaul and southern Britain, indicating the trade axis operating in the early first century BC.

Between the head of the Adriatic and Transdanubia lay the hilly, sometimes mountainous, country of the Julian Alps from which flowed the upper reaches of the Drava and Sava rivers. In terms of modern political geography the region is roughly equivalent to Slovenia and north-western Croatia. It was through this territory, controlled by many Celtic tribes, among them the Taurisci, Carni, Istri, and Iapodi, that items of trade had to pass.

The Carni caused some disruption in 186 BC, when, intent on establishing new settlements, they moved west, forcing the evacuation of Aquileia, but they were eventually driven back in 183. Thereafter Roman relations with the area were not always harmonious. In 171, returning from an abortive attempt to reach Macedonia, a Roman army commanded by Cassius Longinus rampaged through the region taking large numbers of captives to sell as slaves. A formal complaint was presented to the Roman Senate by ambassadors from the Carni, Istri, and Iapodi, and the brother of the king of Noreia went to Rome as a representative of other Alpine tribes. The incident is interesting in demonstrating the nature of diplomatic relations between Celts and Romans at this time. A few decades later, in the 140s and 130s, Polybius records the discovery of gold in the territory of the Taurisci. Italian entrepreneurs joined the gold rush but were expelled when overproduction caused the price of gold to fall. Partly as a result of this a Roman force was sent into the area in 129 BC, gaining victories over the Taurisci, Iapodi, and Istri, and probably also the Liburni and Carni. Further expeditions followed in 115 BC. Thus, although the relations between Rome and the eastern Alpine region were uneasy during the second century, a degree of equilibrium was eventually established, allowing an active trade to develop. At the end of the first century BC Strabo could list the materials flowing through Aquileia as ‘slaves, cattle, and hides’.

The situation further east is confused by the many different ethnic groups inhabiting the area and their mobility. As we have seen, the Celtic enclave in Thrace had been destroyed by the end of the third century and the Celtic communities which had penetrated Transylvania and the southern parts of Moldova and Ukraine had in all probability been absorbed, the former group into the emerging Dacian state, the latter by the Sarmatians and the Bastarnae. After the end of the second century it is unlikely that any recognizable Celtic community existed east of the Middle Danube valley, except for the Galatians in their remote homeland in central Asia Minor.

The Dacians and the Germans

To the east of the Celts of the Middle Danube lay the Thracians and the Dacians, while to the north were many tribes regarded by classical writers as being ethnically German. While the Thracians mostly maintained friendly relations with their Celtic neighbours during the second and first centuries BC, the Dacians and certain of the Germanic peoples made territorial inroads on the Celtic homelands.

The earliest recorded movement came from the north and involved two different tribes, the Cimbri and the Teutones, who migrated, sometimes singly sometimes together, through western Europe in the late second century BC, causing widespread disruption among the Celtic tribes and sending a chill of fear down every Roman spine (Map 29).

The origins of these tribes are obscure, though there is sufficient evidence to suggest that they came from north-west Europe bordering or close to the North Sea. The long debate about their ethnicity—whether Celtic or Germanic—is, and is likely to remain, inconclusive. In 120 BC the Cimbri had moved against the kingdom of Noricum, where they were unsuccessfully opposed by a Roman force. In 114 they were ousted by the Boii in northern Hungary and moved south, where they became involved in various clashes with the Taurisci and Scordisci. Thereafter they thrust westwards into Gaul, inflicting further defeats on Roman armies at Bordeaux in 107 and Orange in 105. A brief expedition through the Pyrenees brought them into conflict with the Celtiberians. By the time they returned once more to southern Gaul, Gaius Marius, with a re-formed Roman army, was ready to meet them. In two decisive battles, in 102 at Aix-en-Provence and 101 at Vercellae in northern Italy, the marauding barbarian forces were destroyed.

The significance of the invasion is difficult to assess. While it may not have caused extensive disruption among the tribes of western Europe, it served to destabilize in that it demonstrated to local tribes that Rome was not invincible.

A more serious threat to the eastern Celtic tribes was posed by the growing power of the Dacians. The origins of the Dacians are obscure. The earliest literary accounts of them relate to the first half of the second century BC, at which time they were successfully preventing the Bastarnae from moving into the Carpathians. Under King Rubobostes, in the 170s BC, their territorial control was said to be increasing, and it is generally assumed that this implies an expansion from their original homeland, in the plain of Wallachia north of the Lower Danube, into Transylvania, where they will have come into contact with long-established Celtic communities, absorbing them into the expanding Dacian state.

By the 80s of the first century BC the focus of Dacian power lay in Transylvania, with its centre in the Oraáştie mountains to the south of the fertile valley of the Muresş. Here, under the leadership of King Burebista working in partnership with a religious leader named Deceneus, a number of disparate tribes, among them the Daci, the Getae, and the Buri, were welded together to form a single powerful state covering roughly the present area of Romania. After some twenty years of consolidation, Burebista was in a strong position, able to command, according to Strabo, 200,000 warriors.

In 60 or 59 BC he began a policy of expansion westwards, moving first against the Scordisci and then against the Boii and Taurisci (Map 30). His intention, Strabo tells us, was to win back ancient Dacian territory. The defeat of the Celtic tribes was so devastating that Strabo was able to write of the ‘desert of the Boii’—a phrase open to several interpretations. The archaeological evidence, mainly in the form of distinctive Dacian pottery, suggests that the conquered territories extended across the northern Tisza region into Slovakia and possibly as far as Moravia. By expanding westwards Burebista was evidently seeking to take control of an important route node where the east–west Danube corridor was crossed by the north–south amber route. He then turned his attention eastwards to the Dobruja, attracted both by the Greek cities of the Pontic coastal region and by the prospect of halting Roman advance north of the Danube.

Having established a massive power block from central Europe to the Black Sea, Burebista felt strong enough to intervene in international politics and in 48 BC he sent a message to Pompey, then at Heraclea Lyncestis in Macedonia, offering him the support of Dacia against Caesar. In the event Pompey was defeated at Pharsalus, and, before Caesar could take up the Dacian challenge, he was assassinated in 44 BC, at about the same time that Burebista met a like fate. The king’s death signalled the end of Dacian expansion: the annexed territories were quickly lost and the Dacian homeland was split into a number of smaller polities ruled by *reguli*, leaving only a resistant core in the Oraá¸tie mountains to provide continuous trouble for Rome until its final conquest early in the second century AD.

The Dacian expansion into the eastern Celtic territories in 60 BC caused considerable reverberations among the Celtic tribes of the Alpine region. The Boii who had been displaced from northern Hungary/Slovakia moved to the south-west into Noricum and besieged Noreia. They were repelled but entered Helvetian territory and subsequently were to join the Helvetii in their abortive migration westwards through Gaul. The alliance of the Boii and Helvetii posed a potential threat to the kingdom of Noricum and it may have been for this reason that Noricum forged a diplomatic bond with a Germanic tribe, the Suebi, by marrying the sister of Voccio, the king of Noricum, to the German leader Ariovistus. In such a circumstance it is possible to understand why, at this stage, Ariovistus was classed as 'king and friend' to Rome and why the Helvetii felt under threat from all sides. Ariovistus was also involved in Gaulish politics as an ally of the Arverni and Sequani against the Aedui and had, by 61 BC, settled a large group of his people in the territory of the Sequani (modern Alsace), further fuelling the tension and instability of the region. The complex situation in the Alps and its western fringes provided Caesar with ample excuse to begin his wars of conquest in Gaul.

It is difficult to judge how unusual the situation in the 60s of the first century BC was. The classical sources are sufficiently detailed to provide a picture of social disruption and migration. It is quite possible that this was a new development caused by the Dacian expansion and exacerbated by population pressures among the Germanic peoples to the north. But it may have been little more than the inherent instability of the Celtic tribal system brought into sharp focus by the sudden interest of the Roman world in the affairs of its northern periphery.

Intensification, Production, and the Emergence of *Oppida*

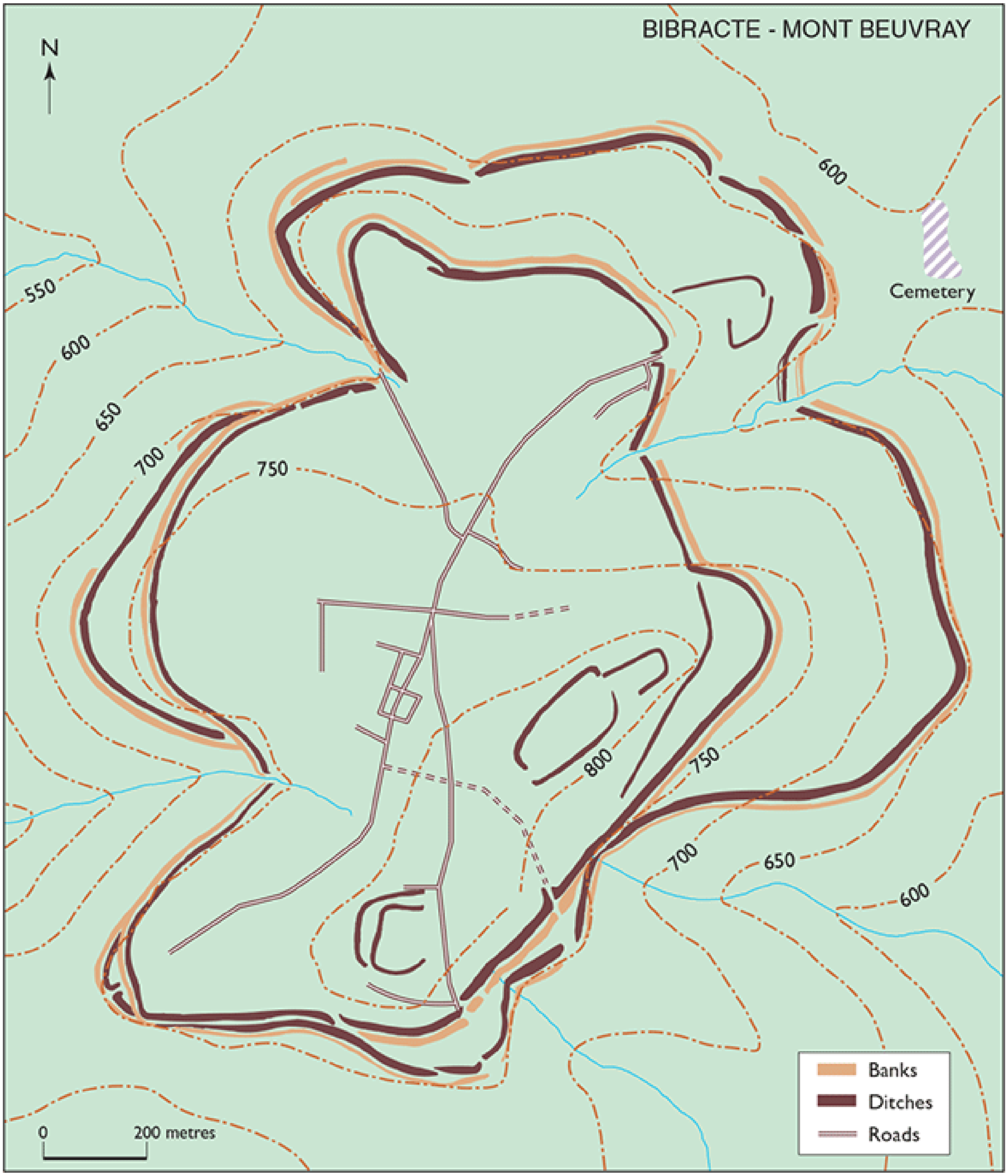
The century and a half after 200 BC saw a series of far-reaching changes in the Celtic world which are represented in the archaeological record as a dramatic increase in production and the rise of large nucleated settlements usually referred to as *oppida* (Map 26). The definition and significance of *oppida* have occasioned a considerable literature and the debate will continue. One potential area of confusion has arisen from the attempt to reconcile Caesar's use of the word *oppidum* with a broad group of large settlements, usually defended, about which there is surprisingly little tangible archaeological evidence. Few of these sites have received more than a cursory archaeological examination and very few have been examined on a scale appropriate to the questions being asked of them. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that there is uncertainty not only about the social and economic processes which led to the development of these sites but even about the functions they performed.

Caesar's use of the word *oppidum* relates specifically to the Celtic sites he encountered during his Gaulish campaigns in the middle of the first century BC. It is, therefore, specific to time and place. He uses it to distinguish the larger settlement locations from villages (*vici*) and farmsteads (*aedificia*). Among these larger settlements he further distinguishes the towns within the Provincia, which he calls *civitates*, and a few other important locations, such as Gergovia, Alesia, and Avaricum, for which he uses the word *urbs*, from the general mass of *oppida*. Even in the light of our present imperfect archaeological knowledge it is clear that the word *oppidum* is used to cover sites of different size and performing different functions spread among tribes with different levels of social organization. There is no suggestion that *oppida* were necessarily tribal capitals: among the Helvetii there were twelve and the Bituriges had twenty. Even the small cliff-castles of the Armorican tribes 'on the far ends of spits and headlands' were described as *oppida*. Caesar, therefore, uses *oppidum* as a convenient portmanteau word and as such it may be used by archaeologists.

Within this very broad category it is possible to distinguish a class of large developed *oppida*. These may be defined as areas of land, usually in excess of 10 hectares, limited by a continuous boundary, man-made or natural, within which a variety of social, religious, and economic functions were performed of the kind needed to enable the complex systems of large communities to operate. A definition of this kind takes with it the implication that the *oppidum* was a focal centre in a larger territory (not necessarily that of the whole tribe): it had a political legitimacy and may have been a place exercising regional authority.

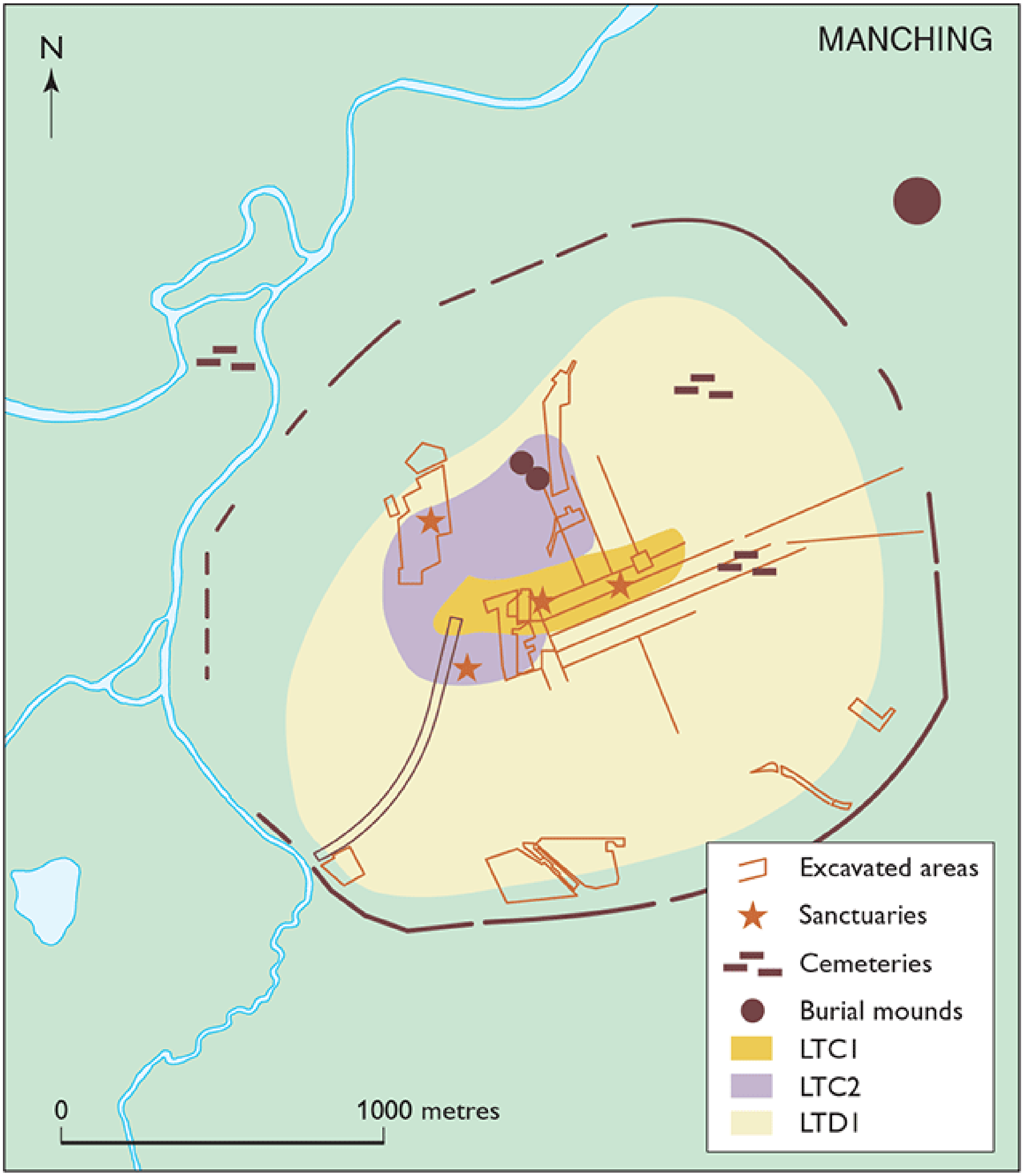
The *oppidum* of Bibracte, in the territory of the Aedui, exemplifies this definition. It was prominently sited on a hilltop commanding an important route nexus. The defended area covered some 135 hectares and required over 5 kilometres of ramparts to be built and maintained. It was, Caesar said, 'by far the largest and richest *oppidum* of the Aedui'. Here envoys from other tribes were received by the chief magistrate and most of the tribal councils met during Caesar's Gallic campaigns, and in 52 BC it was also here that Vercingetorix was confirmed as supreme war leader by Gauls who had gathered from all over the country to oppose the Romans. Its significance was such that the next year Caesar decided to spend the winter there. Excavation has shown that occupation began in the second century BC and continued until about 20 BC, by which time the focus of activity had moved to the newly founded Roman town of *Augustodunum* (Autun) 20 kilometres away.

12.8 The *oppidum* of Bibracte (Mont Beuvray), Saône-et-Loire, France, was the capital of the Aedui at the time of Caesar's conquest.


BIBRACTE - MONT BEUVRAY
N
Cemetery
550
600
650
700
750
800
750
700
650
600
600
Banks
Ditches
Roads
0
200 metres

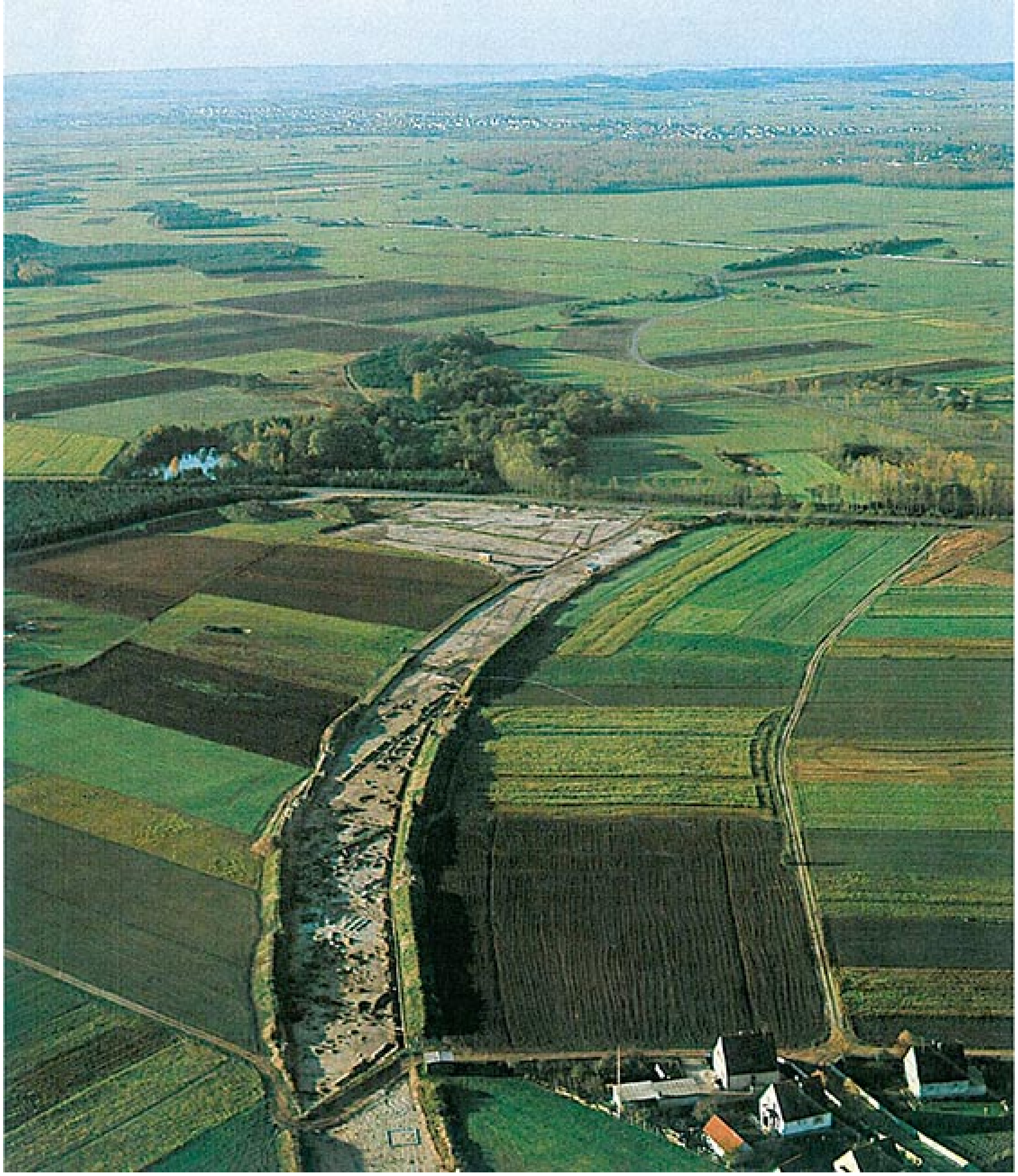
12.9 The *oppidum* of Bibracte (Mont Beuvray) showing the defences and the major roads within the settlement.

The *oppidum* of Manching, in the Lower Danube valley in Bavaria, exemplifies other aspects of this type of settlement. It too was large, occupying some 380 hectares enclosed by a massive timber-laced rampart some 7 kilometres in length. Something of the communal effort involved can be appreciated when it is said that to make the nails which clenched the timbers would have required 60 tons of iron. This, together with the massive mobilization of resources needed to fell and carry the timber, hew the stone, and assemble the ramparts and gates, gives some idea of the vitality of the community and the coercive power of its authorities. Within the enclosed area the central part was densely occupied with houses and other buildings laid out in an ordered manner bounded by paths and streets. Between this area and the ramparts was a more open space which could have been used for pasturing livestock.


MANCHING
N
Excavated areas
Sanctuaries
Cemeteries
Burial mounds
LTC1
LTC2
LTD1
0
1000 metres

12.10 The *oppidum* of Manching, Ingolstadt, Germany, is one of the best known of the *oppida* of temperate Europe as a result of an extended campaign of excavation which exposed a large sample of the densely settled area of the interior.

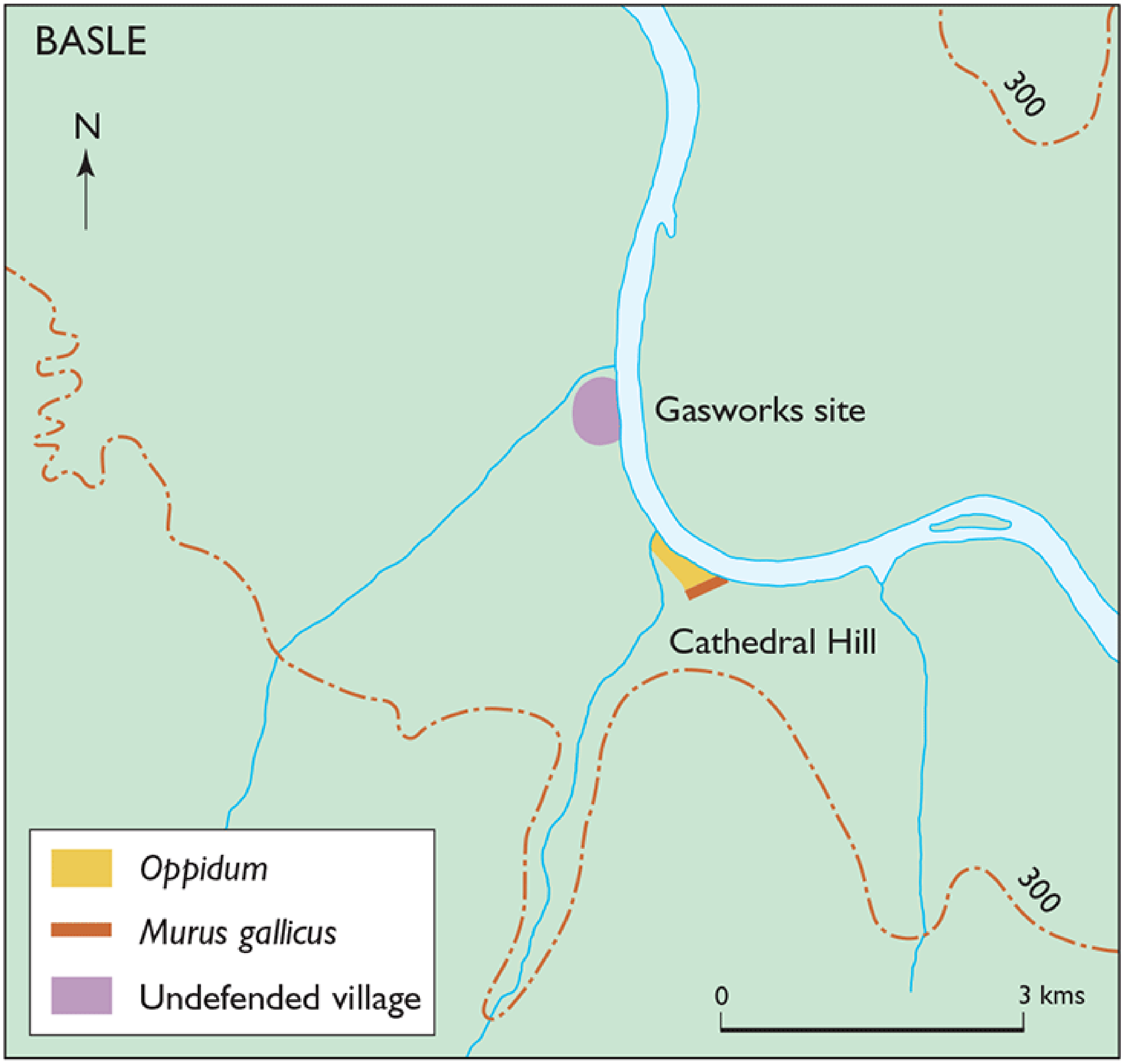
Although only about 5 hectares of the site have been excavated (less than 3 per cent), a huge assemblage of artefacts has been recovered. The tools reflect all the major craft and agricultural processes and there is clear evidence of industrial manufacture on a large scale: iron extraction and forging; bronze-working to make a range of personal jewellery; the production of high-quality pottery; the creation of polychrome bracelets and beads from imported raw glass; and the casting of pellets of gold and silver from which coins could be struck. There can be little doubt from the items produced, and from the distribution of the more distinctive types in the territory around, that the craftsmen working in Manching reached an impressively large market area. In this respect Manching functioned as a service centre for its hinterland.



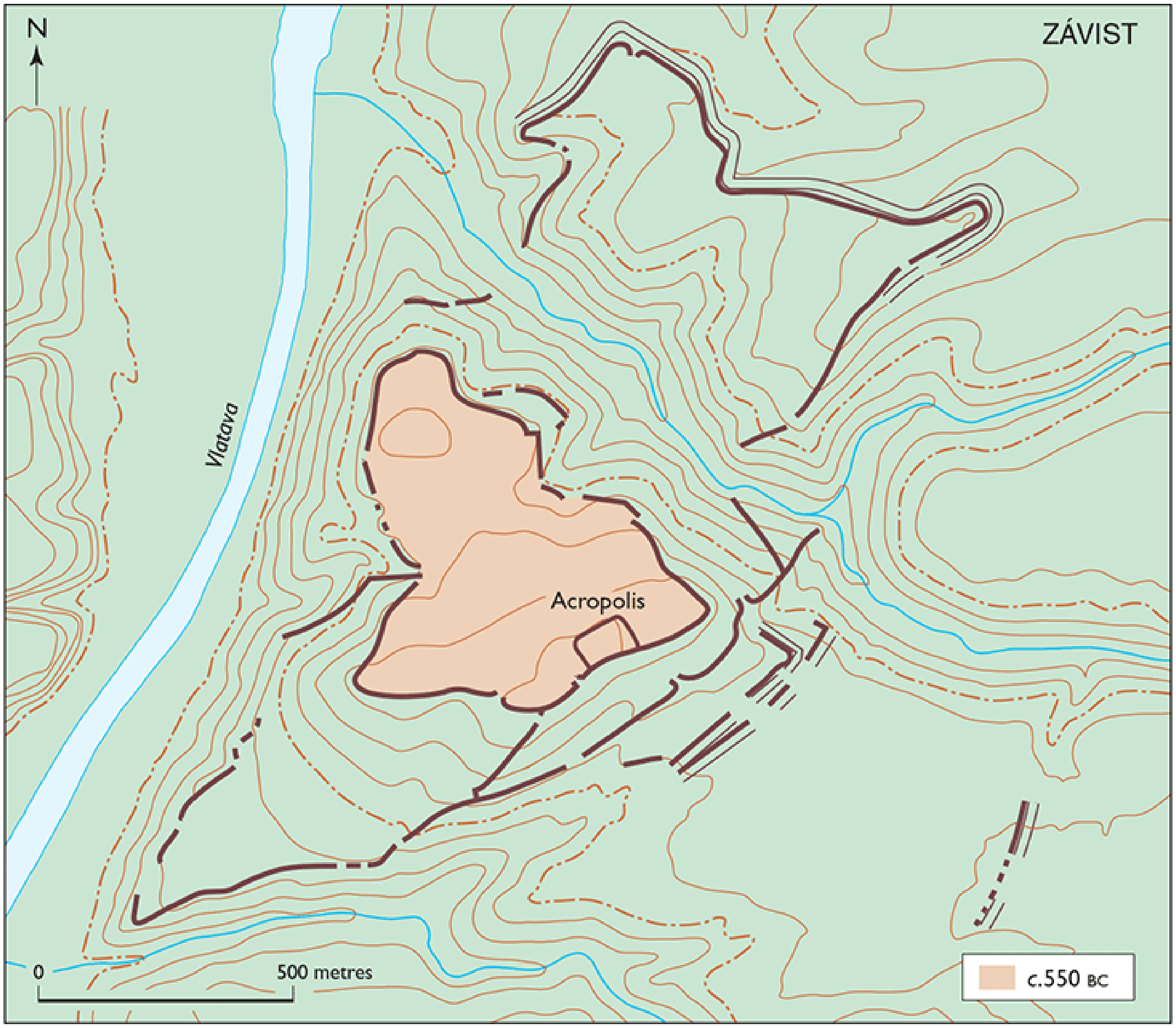
12.11 An excavation conducted within the *oppidum* of Manching in 1965 in advance of construction work. The pits, post-holes, and ditches, showing as dark marks cut into the bedrock, clearly demonstrate the regular rectilinear layout of the boundaries of the first-century BC settlement.

The excavations at Manching have been on a sufficiently large scale to provide some evidence for the development of the site. Occupation began in the third century with an agglomeration of small farms with their fields and pastures. Throughout the second century the population increased, and at the same time craft specialization and coin production speak of greater complexity. Sometime in the 130s–120s BC, a period of insecurity exacerbated by the wanderings of the Cimbri and Teutones, there is evidence of destruction followed by a total rebuilding, this time within the protection of the massive defensive perimeter. Thereafter, for seventy or eighty years, the *oppidum* continued to flourish, the defences being rebuilt or repaired on two occasions. After the middle of the first century BC decline set in, exacerbated by the rapidly changing political configuration and the economic upheavals consequent upon it.

The development of Manching provides a convenient yardstick for comparison with the other *oppida* and for showing the way in which such sites might develop from simple rural village beginnings, but it should not be taken as the only model for the evolution and functioning of *oppida*: varying economic pressures and individual political histories will have produced a variety of patterns.


BASLE
N
300
Gasworks site
Cathedral Hill
300
Oppidum
Murus gallicus
Undefended village
0
3 kms

12.12 The nucleated settlement which developed on the banks of the Rhine (now beneath the site of Basle, Switzerland) in the first century BC was first an open settlement. Later, after about 50 BC, the occupation moved to a new defended location on Cathedral Hill.



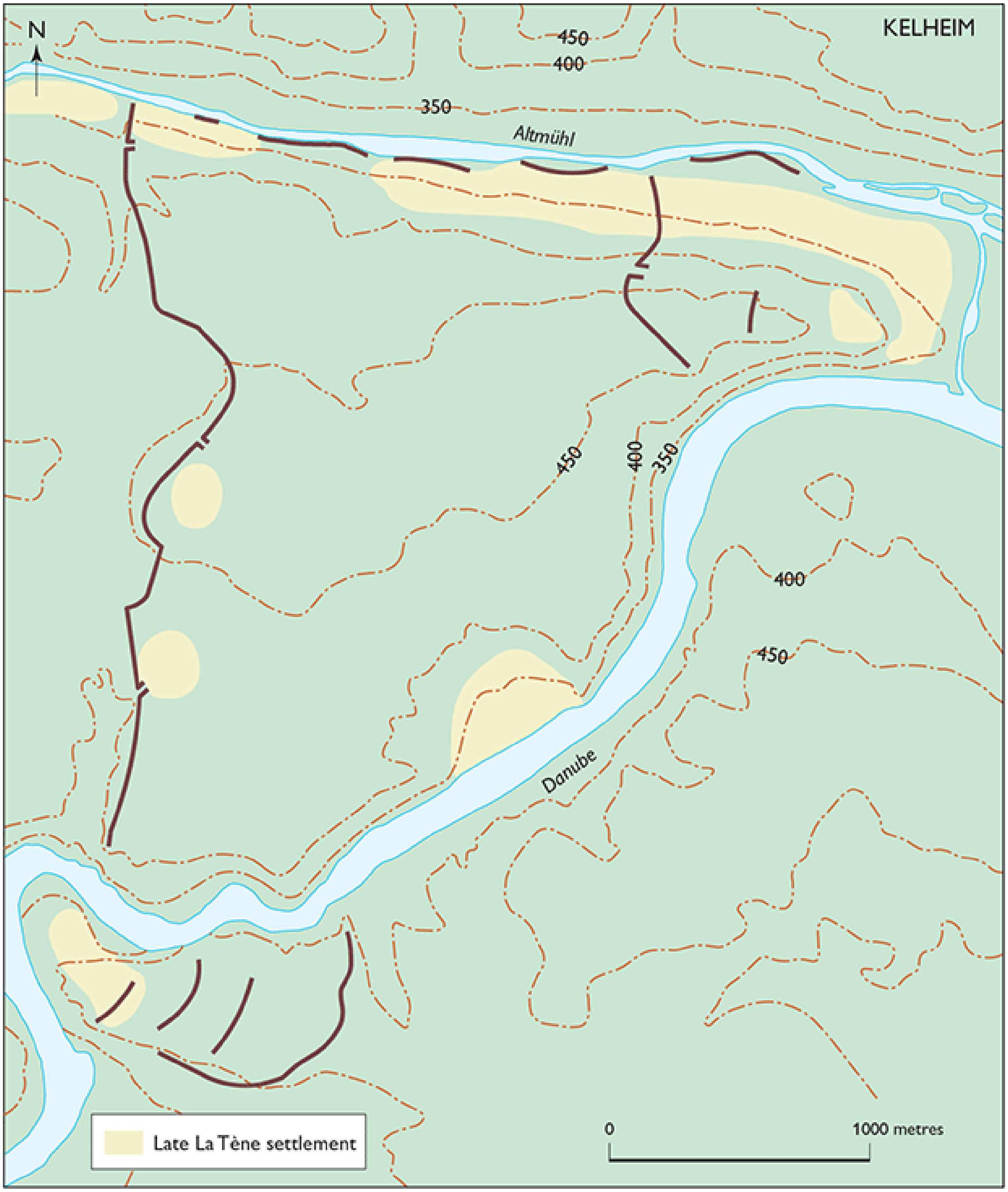
12.13 The *oppidum* of Závist, Bohemia, Czech Republic, has been the focus of a long campaign of excavations which has allowed the complex development of the defences to be disentangled. The site was first defended in the sixth century BC and grew to its maximum extent in the first century BC.

Závist, in the valley of the Vltava, south of Prague, presents an example of a different kind of scenario. Here a hillfort flourishing in the fifth and fourth centuries BC provided a focus for the development of a much larger *oppidum*, which in the second century covered an area of 150 hectares with a perimeter of 9 kilometres. The history of the site appears to have been troubled, and several phases of destruction have been noted, requiring one of the main gates to be rebuilt on five occasions. The population seems to have grown rapidly during the first century BC, when new enclosures were successively added to the original nucleus. Internal organization, like that at Manching, was controlled and regular streets were maintained. Structures identified as farms occurred alongside other houses and there was ample evidence of craft production, particularly of ironwork and the minting of gold and silver coins. Occupation ended in a disastrous fire in 25 or 20 BC, which may have been related to the Germanic penetration of Bohemia.

The sequence observed at Levroux (Indre) provides another example, like Manching, of an *oppidum* which began as an open undefended village and was succeeded, sometime about 80–70 BC, by a strongly defended settlement of some 20 hectares in extent. The difference is that at Levroux the two settlements were about 1.5 kilometres apart. The situation at Basle is much the same. Here an undefended settlement on the plain, on the banks of the Rhine, began in the third century BC. It seems to have been abandoned around 60 BC in favour of a fortified *oppidum* of about 5 hectares in area, 1.5 kilometres away, on the site now occupied by the cathedral. One possible historical context for this shift may have been the social turmoil which would have accompanied the migration of the local tribe, the Raurici, in the company of the Helvetii, in 58 BC, and their subsequent defeat by the Romans. This same shift from open settlement to fortified hill site is also reflected in the settlement pattern at Aulnat near Clermont-Ferrand.

While the evidence for the origins and development of *oppida* is still far from adequate, the picture which emerges suggests a gradual growth over time of what began in the third or second century BC as open village settlements. These then slowly acquired a range of specialized manufacturing functions. Eventually in the first century BC communities decided to defend themselves, either for reasons of status or because of the uncertainties of the time. Thereafter, where local conditions permitted or demanded, the defences were refurbished or extended. The size and development of these *oppida* depended on a variety of factors, among which the most important would have been their ability to command raw materials or major routeways. It is no coincidence that successful *oppida* like Manching and Kelheim were located close to rich supplies of iron, while Třísov in Bohemia had in the immediate vicinity a prolific source of graphite which was extensively used in pottery manufacture. Other *oppida* commanded major routes: Staré Hradisko in Moravia benefited by being astride the amber route, as the quantities of amber found in the excavation bear witness, while Závist, Bratislava, and Berne could have controlled traffic along the rivers they overlooked—the Vltava, Danube, and Rhine.

Differences in size may to some extent have reflected the different status and prosperity of the community. Manching, with its 380 hectares eventually enclosed, is large by any standards, and the 9 kilometres of ramparts at Závist, even though not all of the same date, reflect colossal effort expended by the community. But an enclosed area alone is not a direct measure of status. The remarkable 630 hectares of Kelheim and 1,500 hectares of Heidengraben were achieved by judicious use of comparatively short lengths of man-made defences across promontories between the meandering courses of the Rhine and the Danube, while the coastal port of Hengistbury, before recent erosion, would have extended to some 120 hectares behind a single rampart only 600 metres in length, which cut the promontory off from its hinterland.


N
KELHEIM
450
400
350
Altmühl
450
400
350
400
450
Danube
Late La Tène settlement
0
1000 metres

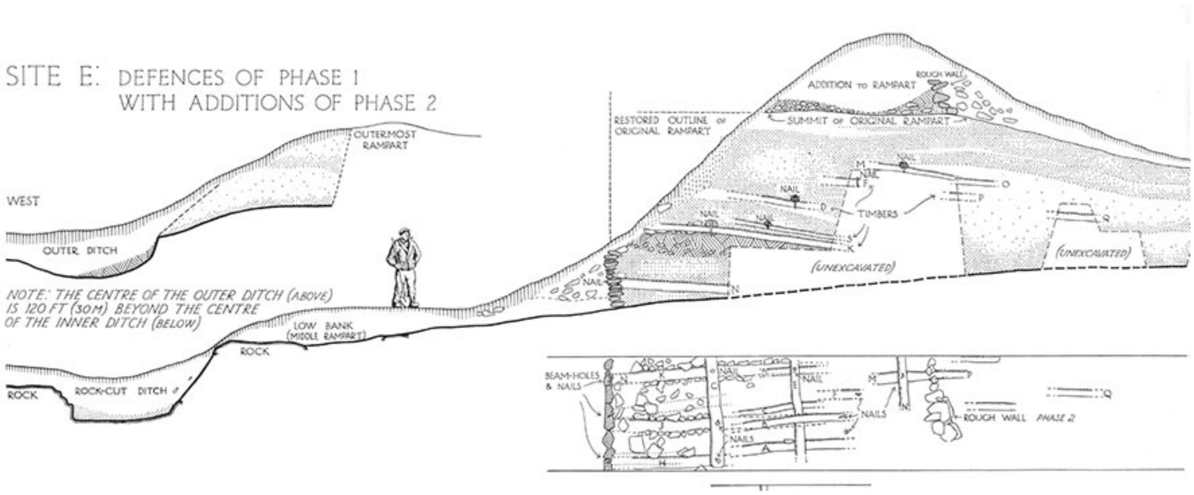
12.14 The *oppidum* of Kelheim, Bavaria, Germany, occupies a large area, but this is achieved by making good use of the river Danube and its tributaries in lieu of ramparts.

Although a variety of defensive techniques were used, most of the large *oppida* which have been excavated fall into one of two categories: a western European type called the *murus gallicus* style and a central European type known as the *Pfostenschlizmauer* style. *Murus gallicus* is the phrase used by Julius Caesar to describe the type of fortification he commonly encountered during his Gallic campaigns:

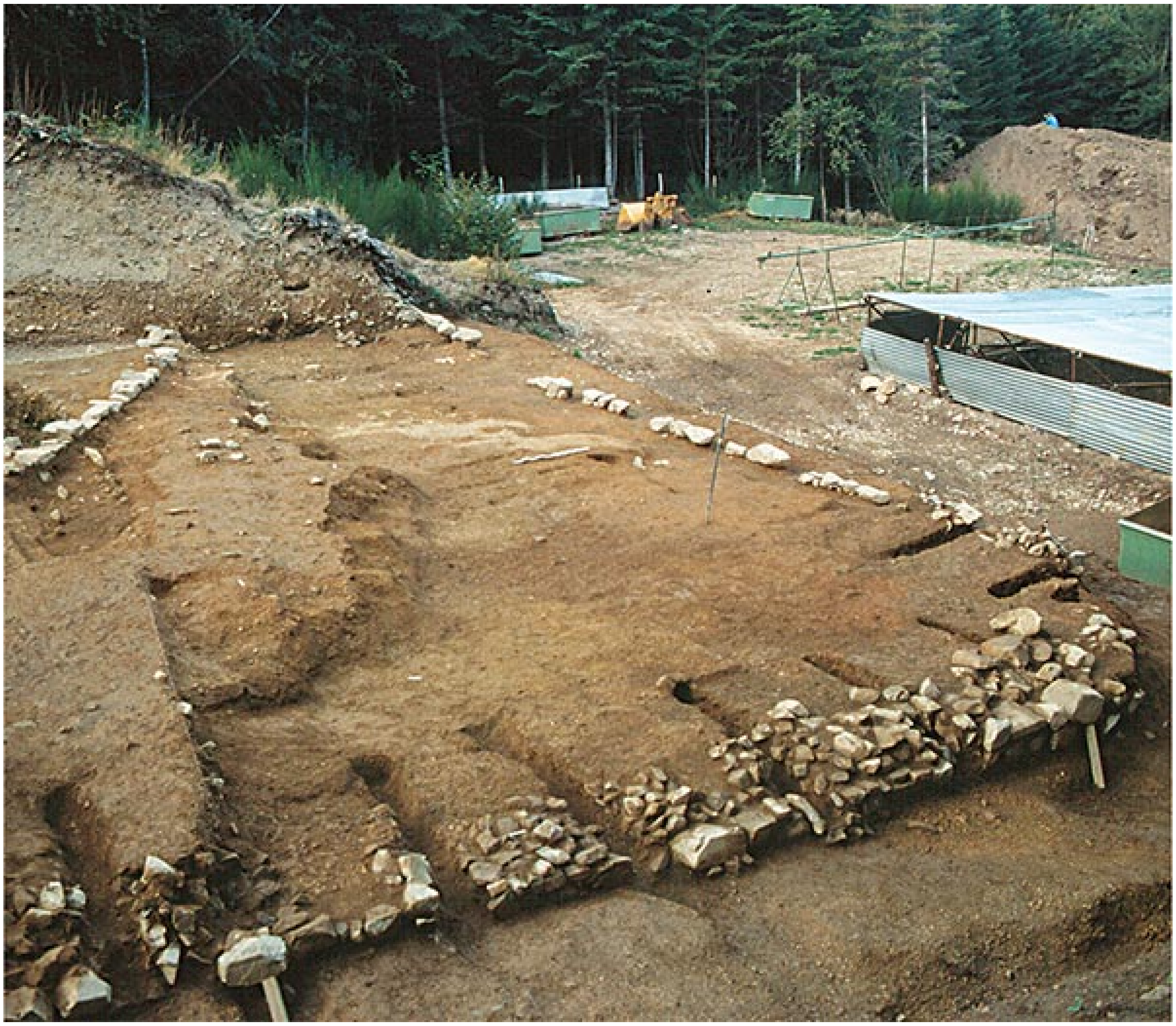
> Wooden beams are laid on the ground at regular intervals of two feet along the whole length of the wall and at right angles to it. They are fastened together on the inside and covered with a thick layer of rubble; at the front large stones are used to form a facing which fills the spaces between the timbers. When this first course has been laid and made firm, another is added. This is set on top in such a way that, although there is a two-foot space between its timbers as well, they do not touch those of the first course but are separated from them by a vertical interval of two feet.
>
> (*De Bello Gallico* 7. 23)

He goes on to commend the regular appearance of the wall seen from the outside with its alternating timbers and stones running in straight rows at standard intervals from each other, noting that such a structure made a good defence, the stone protecting the wall against fire while the timbers provided resilience against the battering ram. About thirty structures of this type have been found and excavated. They are concentrated mainly in Gaul, but the style extends as far as the Upper Rhine and the Upper Danube. Most of those excavated exhibited the additional refinement of having the timbers fastened at the crossing point by large iron nails.

The second type of defensive structure—the *Pfostenschlizmauer* or Kelheim type—involved creating a vertical front wall with large upright timbers set in post-holes 1–2 metres apart with the intervening spaces filled with dry-stone-work. The verticals were tied back with horizontal timbers into the ramp of soil and rubble behind. This type of defence is characteristic of the eastern Celtic area stretching from just west of the Moselle to Moravia. The distributions of the two styles overlap in the Upper Rhine–Upper Danube area, and at Manching the Kelheim type of wall was adopted when the earlier *murus gallicus* was rebuilt.


SITE E: DEFENCES OF PHASE 1
WITH ADDITIONS OF PHASE 2
OUTERMOST RAMPART
WEST
OUTER DITCH
NOTE: THE CENTRE OF THE OUTER DITCH (ABOVE) IS 120 FT (30M) BEYOND THE CENTRE OF THE INNER DITCH (BELOW)
LOW BANK (MIDDLE RAMPART)
ROCK
ROCK
ROCK-CUT DITCH
RESTORED OUTLINE OF ORIGINAL RAMPART
ADDITION TO RAMPART
ROUGH WALL
SUMMIT OF ORIGINAL RAMPART
NAIL
NAIL
NAIL
NAIL
NAIL
NAIL
TIMBERS
(UNEXCAVATED)
(UNEXCAVATED)
BEAM-HOLES & NAILS
NAIL
NAIL
NAILS
NAILS
ROUGH WALL PHASE 2

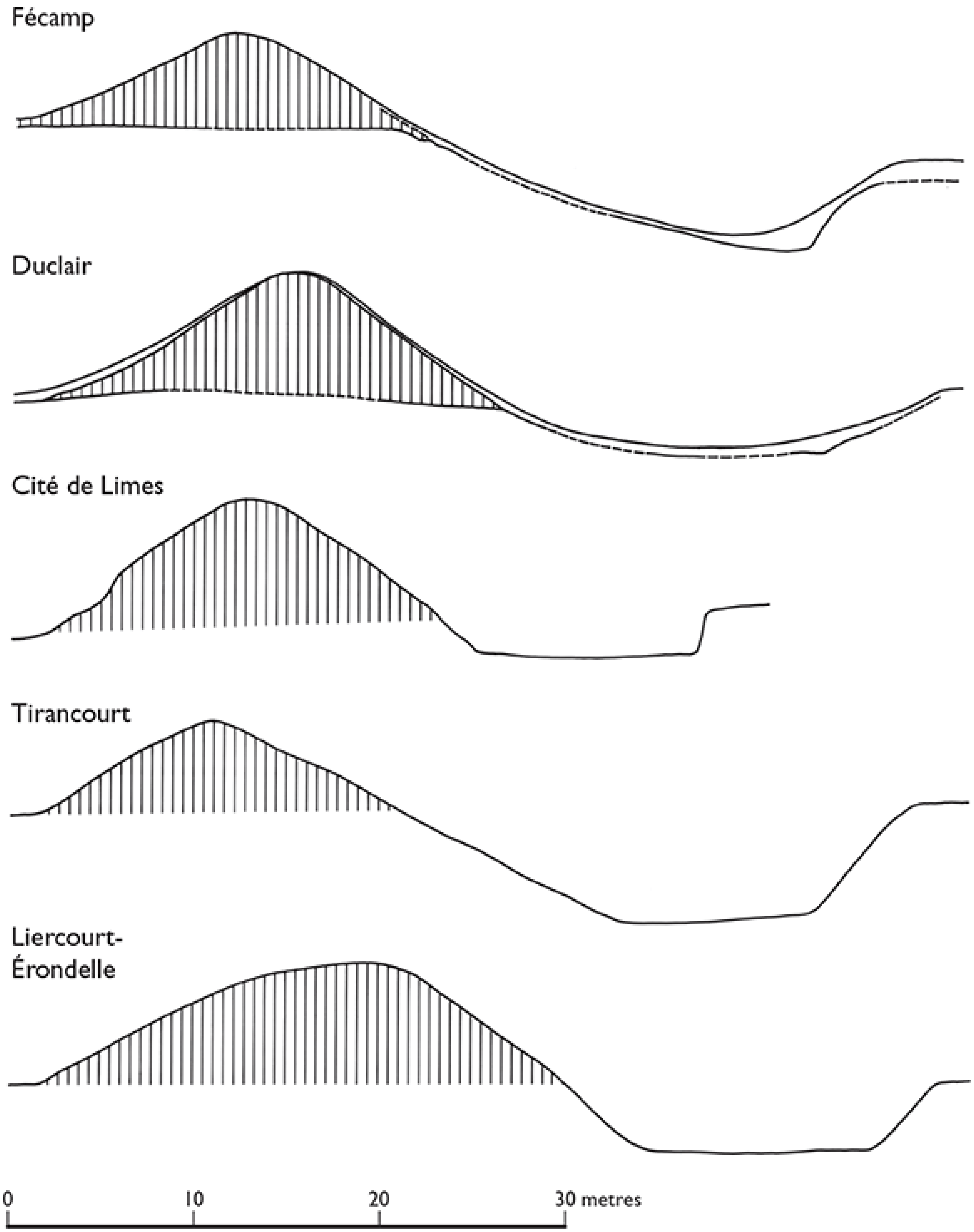
12.15 Section through the *murus gallicus* defence of Le Camp d’Artus at Huelgoat, Finistère, France, drawn by Sir Mortimer Wheeler. The position of the lacing timbers and the nails joining them was clearly observed.



12.16 The walls of Bibracte, at the Porte du Rebout entrance, were built of earth and rubble laced with horizontal timbers and faced with stonework in the *murus gallicus* style, as defined by Julius Caesar.

A third distinctive type of defence has been identified in northern Gaul, distributed mainly, but not exclusively, north of the Seine and named after the fortification at Fécamp. Here the rampart was composed of tips of earth and rubble without timber structuring, its front face being steeply sloped. Added strength was provided by a wide flat-bottomed ditch. At Le Yaudet, on the north coast of Brittany, the rampart cutting off the promontory was built first as a *murus gallicus* but was later rebuilt in Fécamp style probably at about the time of Caesar's conquests. This type of rampart construction (but seldom the ditch type) was adopted in contemporary fortifications in south-eastern Britain. The gates of the *oppida* were usually elaborate structures set back at the end of a corridor or courtyard created by inturning the ends of the ramparts.

Standing back from the detail, we may say that *oppida* are large nucleated settlements exhibiting a high degree of social organization reflecting the power of the hierarchy to mobilize surplus labour in the interests of the community. Many evolved from earlier undefended villages and in all a high percentage of the population was involved in productive activities which generated manufactured goods for extensive hinterlands. The documentary evidence provided by Caesar makes clear that in some, like Cenabum (Orléans), Roman traders had taken up residence. The major *oppida* were also places where tribal assemblies could meet and where embassies from other tribes could be received. This list suggests that by the middle of the first century BC many of the *oppida* had acquired the functions appropriate to urban centres and we might reasonably refer to them as towns.


Fécamp
Duclair
Cité de Limes
Tirancourt
Liercourt-Érondelle
0
10
20
30 metres

12.17 Diagrammatic sections through ramparts of Fécamp type in Normandy and Picardy. Those tested by excavation were dump-constructed without timber or stonewall strengthening. The wide flat-bottomed ditch is a distinctive characteristic.

The emphasis on command of trade routes and raw materials and on the production of consumer durables implies that the economic imperative was a significant factor in the emergence of *oppida*. This may have come about as the result of internal social pressures but external factors, such as the intensifying demands of the Roman economic system for manpower and raw materials after *c.*200 BC, will have played a part. The *oppidum* zone lay on the periphery of the Roman world. Roman traders soon began to set themselves up in the key market centres; within another century the Roman armies had taken over. It was a case of trade preceding the flag.

Social Organization: Power and Prestige

For the Roman system to have engaged economically with the Celtic world implies that what it had to offer was acceptable in Celtic society. We have suggested above that this was indeed the case. With the raid becoming obsolete as a mode of elite expression, new forms of aggrandizement and display were developing which involved the manipulation of commodities, either generated within the tribal group or acquired by trade.

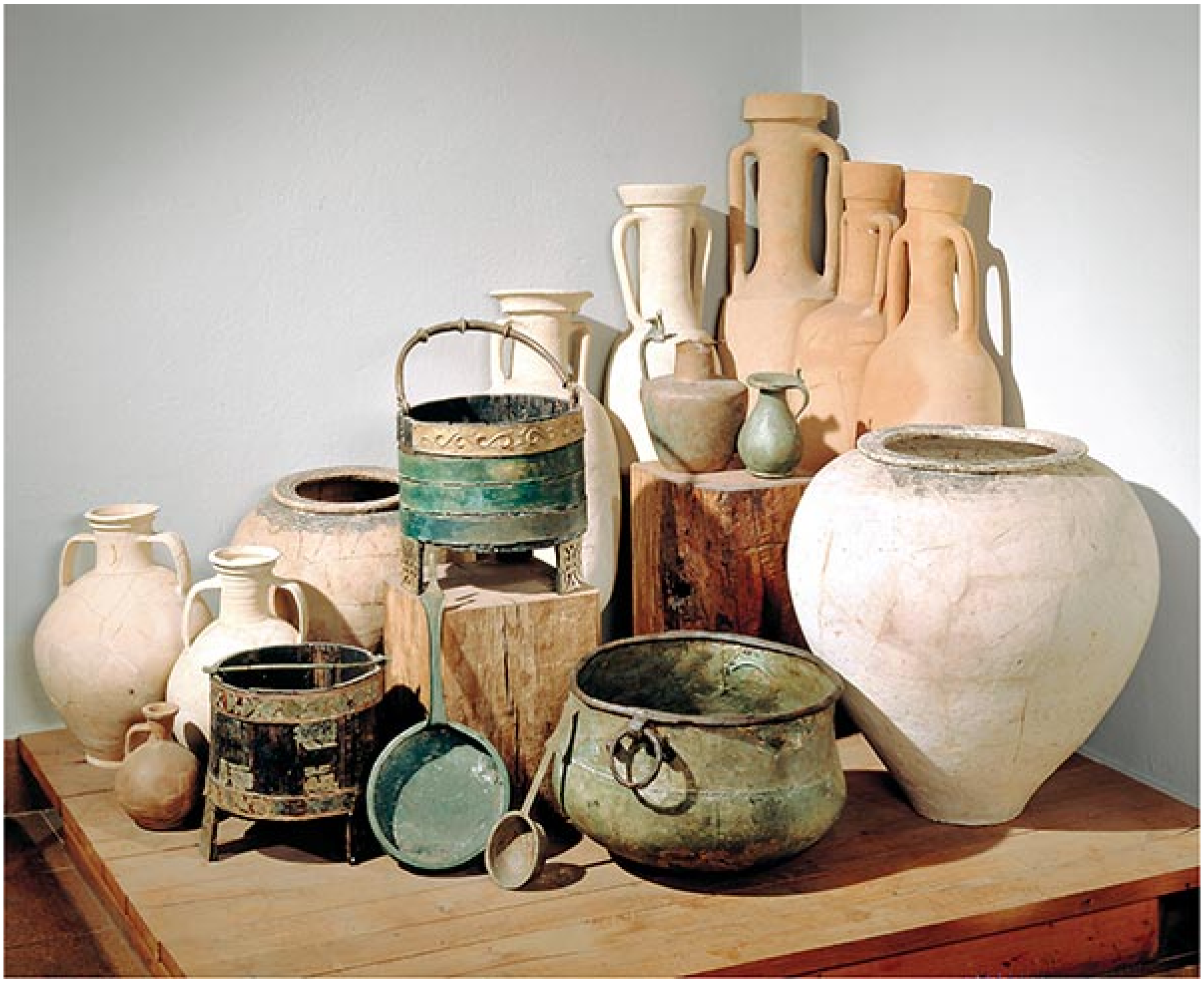
The social changes in the expression of power and prestige now under way in Gaulish society are reflected in Caesar's *Commentaries on the Gallic War*. The situation among the Helvetii is informative. Orgetorix was the richest and most distinguished man in his tribe, but he 'aspired to kingship' and, according to Caesar, attempted to persuade Casticus, a noble of the Sequani, and Dumnorix of the Aedui to do the same. 'The three exchanged an oath of loyalty, hoping that when each had seized royal power they would be able to control the whole of Gaul.' However, the conspiracy was discovered and Orgetorix was arrested to stand trial. If found guilty, the punishment would be death by burning. To evade the consequences Orgetorix called together his kin and clients (some 10,000 according to Caesar), but the tribal magistrates amassed a force to oppose him, and in the chaos which followed he died, possibly by suicide. The incident is informative in that it shows that among certain more socially evolved tribes government by an annually elected magistrate had replaced kingship, but such was the social instability of the new arrangement that to aspire to kingship was regarded as a very serious offence. The point is again made when Caesar mentions in passing that Celtillus, an Arvernian and the father of Vercingetorix, had once been the most powerful man in the whole of Gaul and had been killed by his fellow tribesmen because he wished to become king.

The elected magistrate, called the Vergobret by the Aedui, had the power of life and death over his people. During his term of office he was forbidden to leave his country, and a further rule laid down that a second member of the same family could not be appointed a magistrate while the other family member was alive, and indeed two family members might not even serve on the tribal council together. These strict controls were evidently designed to prevent an elected representative from leading a raiding force into another territory and to make sure that power did not concentrate in the hands of any one family. Regulations of this kind hint that the change from the old system to the new had only just got under way and that the elected magistracy was still a delicate growth.

These social changes seem to have first been introduced among the Gaulish tribes closest to the Roman Provincia and are likely, therefore, to have been influenced by the Roman example. Elsewhere in Gaul kings were still much in evidence, though the system allowed for war leaders to be appointed to command the troops of more than one tribe when the need arose. The election of Vercingetorix to lead the opposition to Caesar in 52 BC is the prime example.

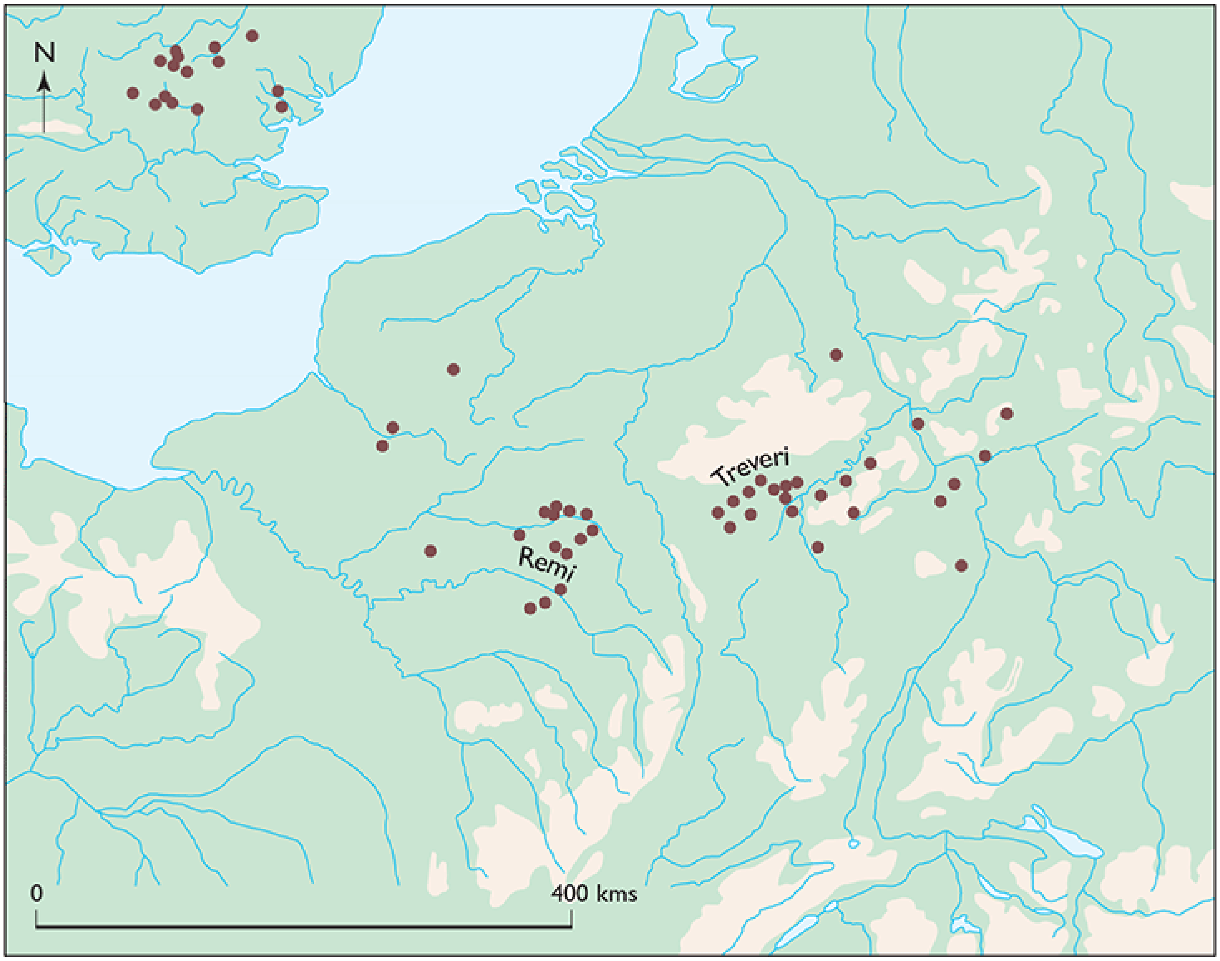
Caesar’s sweeping generalization—that in Gaul only the knights and Druids were of any social significance—is useful in that it makes clear that the power lay with a social elite among which the mounted warrior was still a person of note. It was the class from which the tribal leader and the war leader would be drawn. The size of the entourage which a man could call upon, because of lineage or clientage, was the demonstration of social prowess, if no longer of military power. His ability to maintain or enhance that following was now largely dependent on his ability to manipulate production and the wealth generated through trade.

The archaeological identification of the elite is not easy, nor is it clear whether or not they lived within the *oppida*. Rich burials which can reasonably be regarded as kingly have been found within the bounds of the *oppidum* of Camulodunum (Colchester), suggesting that in south-eastern Britain in the early first century AD the top echelons of the elite were closely associated with the growing urban nucleus. But not all of the aristocracy were *oppida*-centred, if the burial evidence can be taken as indicative. Indeed, in south-east Britain there appears to be no close correlation between *oppida* and rich burials. Much the same can be said of burials found across northern Gaul. In the territory of the Treveri, for example, the elite burials of Goeblingen-Nospelt (Luxembourg) were 17 kilometres from the *oppidum* of Titelberg.



12.18 The contents of a princely grave (tomb B) at Goeblingen-Nospelt, Luxembourg. Wine was provided in large amphorae and mixed and drunk from imported bronze vessels. The bronze-bound wooden buckets, similar to those found in southern Britain, are of local manufacture. Late first century BC. Musée national d'histoire et d'art, Luxembourg.

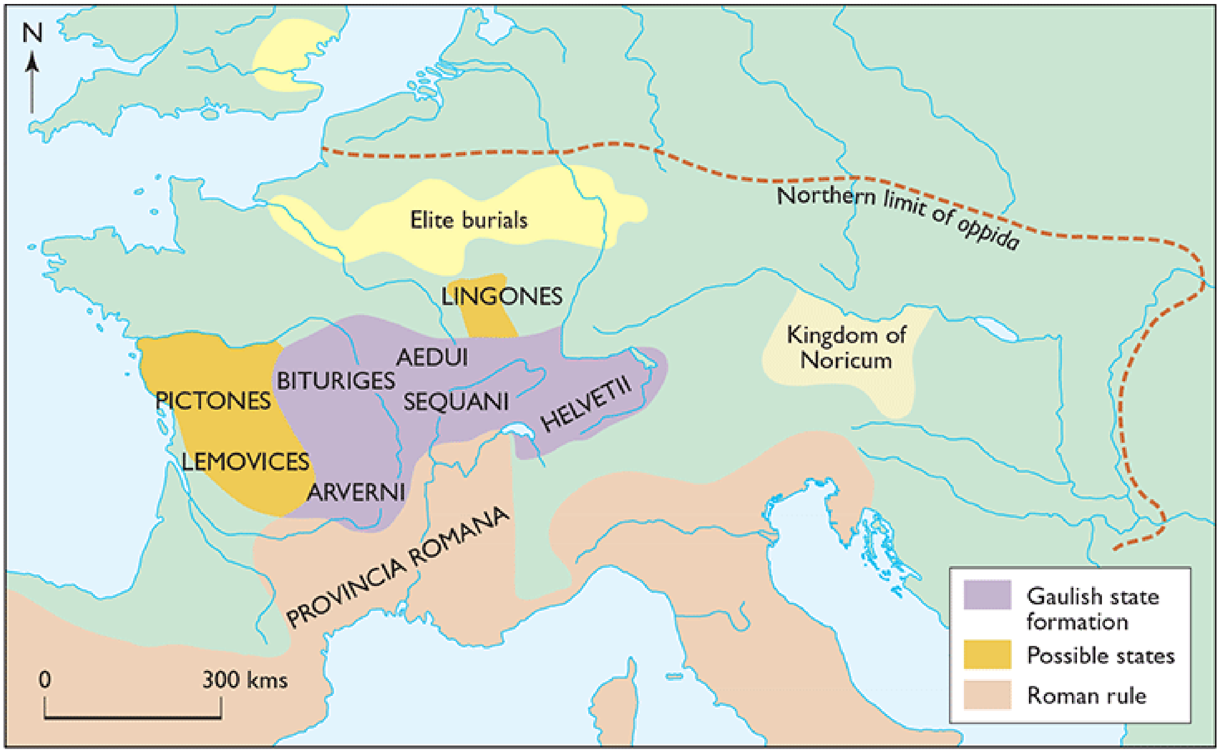
Rich burials of the types just referred to were not evenly spread throughout the *oppida* zone but are restricted to a peripheral zone in west and north-west Europe (Map 25). Within this region, from the late second century BC, warriors' tombs, some provided with a rich array of grave goods, begin to appear. Most contain fittings appropriate to the feast, such as amphorae containing wine, jugs, basins, and paterae, frequently imported from the Roman world, as well as fire-dogs and other hearth furniture. A few were provided with parts of chariots or chariot fittings.



12.19 Elite burials of the Late La Tène period cluster in a broad zone from Kent to Germany. They are characterized by their use of imported wine-drinking equipment and wine amphorae coming from northern Italy and reflect a type of prestige goods economy developing in the second half of the first century BC. In Britain burials of this kind continue into the middle of the first century AD.

In Britain it is possible to recognize a hierarchy of burials. The simplest are cremations in pots, sometimes accompanied by other pottery vessels. Next come those provided with bronze-bound wooden buckets and occasionally other luxury items such as imported Roman bronze vessels. These are named after the type site at Aylesford in Kent. Rich female burials, of the same social level, were provided with decorated mirrors and sometimes bronze bowls. More elaborate are the Welwyn-type burials arranged in pits with amphorae and imported tableware. Finally there are the kingly burials such as Lexden, Colchester, and Folly Lane, St Albans, where the exceptionally rich grave goods were ritually destroyed, presumably at the point when the lying in state of the dead king was over and the body was ready for cremation.

In Gaul, especially in the central and western part of the territory, the richer burials were often accompanied by short swords with anthropoid hilts. Widely distributed from Hungary to Britain, such swords may have been an emblem of a particular social class.

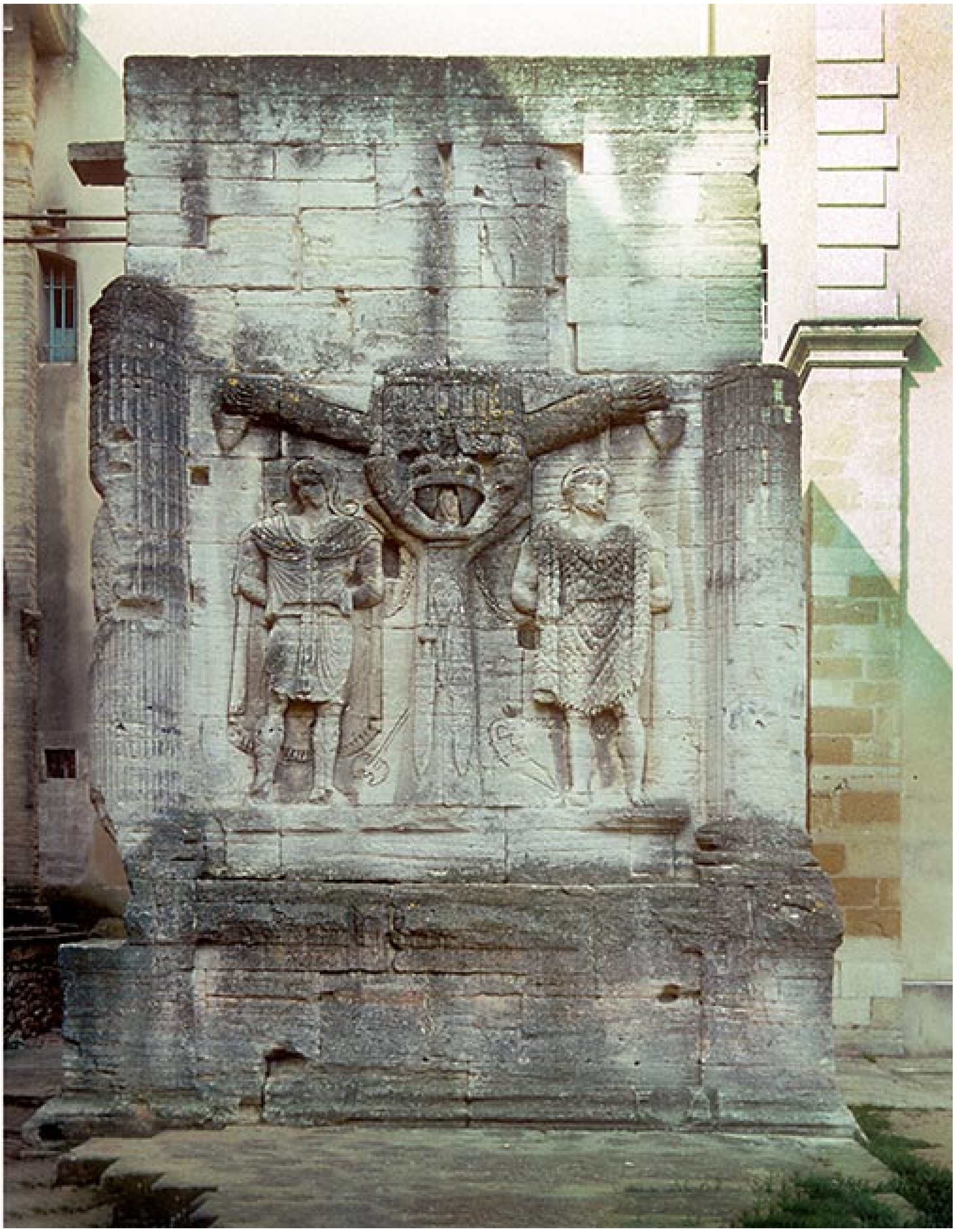

N
Elite burials
Northern limit of *oppida*
LINGONES
AEDUI
BITURIGES
PICTONES
SEQUANI
HELVETII
LEMOVICES
ARVERNI
PROVINCIA ROMANA
Kingdom of Noricum
0
300 kms
Gaulish state formation
Possible states
Roman rule

12.20 Map indicating the different social zones evident in the early first century BC.

The appearance of this broad zone of elite burials stretching from south-eastern Britain and western France across to Luxembourg suggests that the social system which they represent may have differed from that which had developed in the core of Europe, where the large *oppida* flourished. If so, then the totality of the evidence available to us might be taken to indicate three broad social zones: a core zone of tribes or early states which were adopting governments of elected magistrates; an intermediate zone of polities ruled by kings where large *oppida*, like those of the first zone, had developed; and a periphery where elite status was still being expressed in the ancient manner with sumptuous burial rites. Beyond, up to the Rhine, in central, western, and northern Britain, and in Ireland, old social systems continued much as they had done for centuries. The army of Queen Boudica in AD 60 and that led by Calgacus in northern Scotland in AD 84 appear to have been organized in much the same way as the Celtic forces who confronted the Romans in Italy three centuries earlier.

Clearly, any such model is a generalization. The situation in the second and first centuries BC was by no means static. Society was changing fast. The tribes living in areas more distant from the influence of the Roman world inevitably evolved at a different rate from those in direct daily contact.

After 60 BC the pace of change, which hitherto had been regular in momentum and trajectory, was dramatically dislocated as Rome began its accelerated expansion northwards.



13

The Celts in Retreat

DURING the third century BC the Celtic world reached its greatest extent. As earlier chapters have described, Celtic-speaking communities had occupied Atlantic Europe from way back in the early Bronze Age, if not earlier, and by the middle of the first millennium BC the language was widely spoken across middle Europe. Thereafter bands of Celts had spread south into the Po valley and east into the Carpathian basin, some pushing on to establish a homeland in Asia Minor from where they harried the Graeco-Roman world earning a reputation as ferocious fighters. Smaller communities had spread around the northern shores of the Black Sea and others had penetrated northwards through the Carpathians into southern Poland. Isolated war bands had reached Delphi; mercenaries were operating in Egypt; and ambassadors had followed Alexander to Babylon.

The Second Punic War completely altered the balance of power in the Mediterranean. Rome moved into an expansive mode. From the end of the war in 202 BC until the capitulation of Numantia in 133 BC the Celtiberians and Lusitani were gradually brought under control. The first two decades of the second century saw the Roman armies win a series of major campaigns in Italy north of the Apennines, paving the way for Romanization, largely completed within a century. In Asia Minor the Celts of Galatia were brought to heel by the Roman army in 189 BC, after which, though they were still nominally free, their powers were progressively circumscribed.

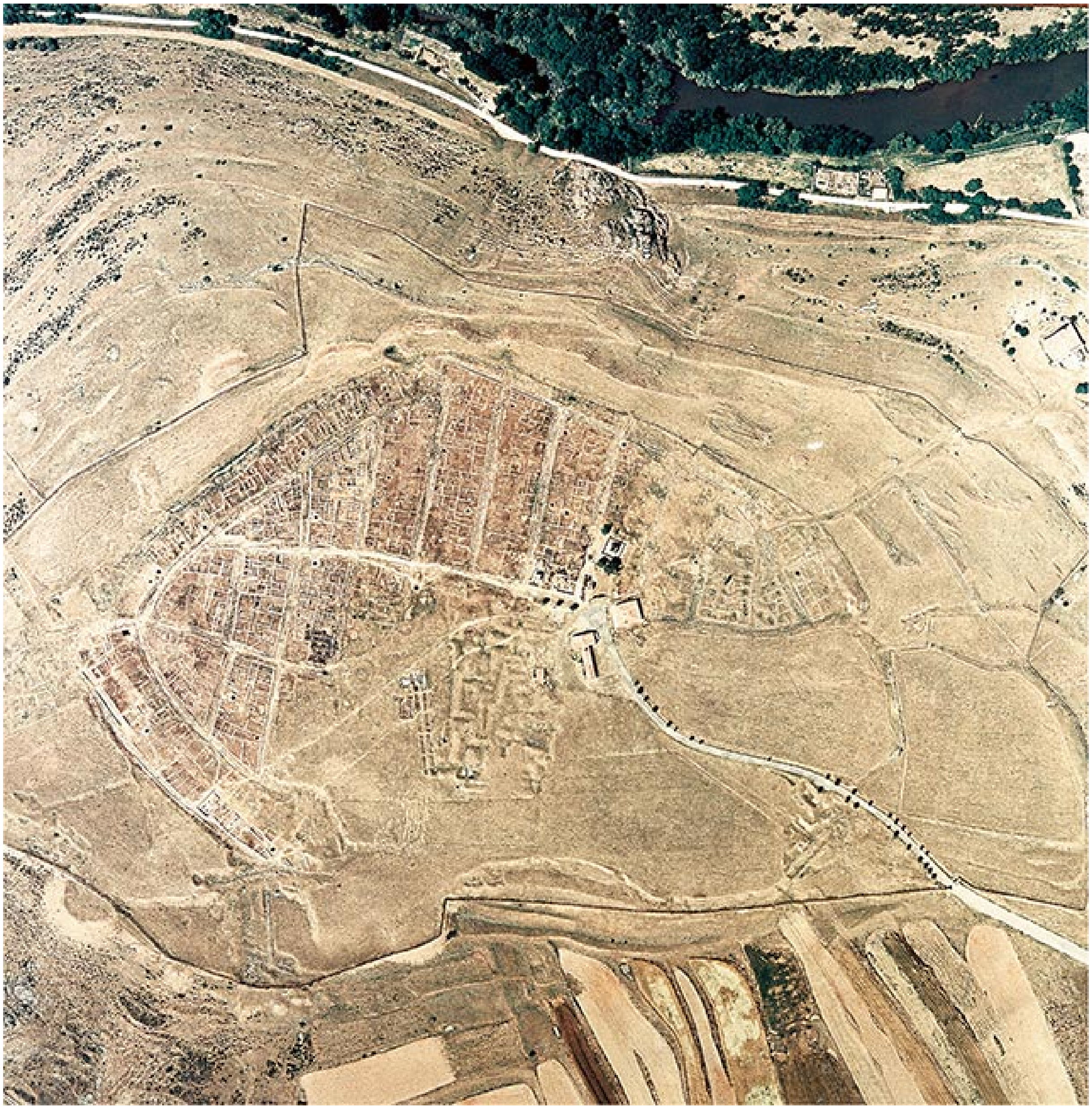
In 133 the fall of Numantia in the west and the gift of the Pergamene kingdom to Rome in the east, following the death of Attalus III, established Rome as a world power. Within a decade southern Gaul had been annexed, marking the first step in Rome's systematic encirclement of the Mediterranean. At about the same time campaigns in the eastern Alps had extended Roman influence deep into central Europe. Along this immensely long interface, from south-western Iberia to the mountains of Illyria, the Roman world confronted Celtic tribes.

Celtiberians and the Classical World

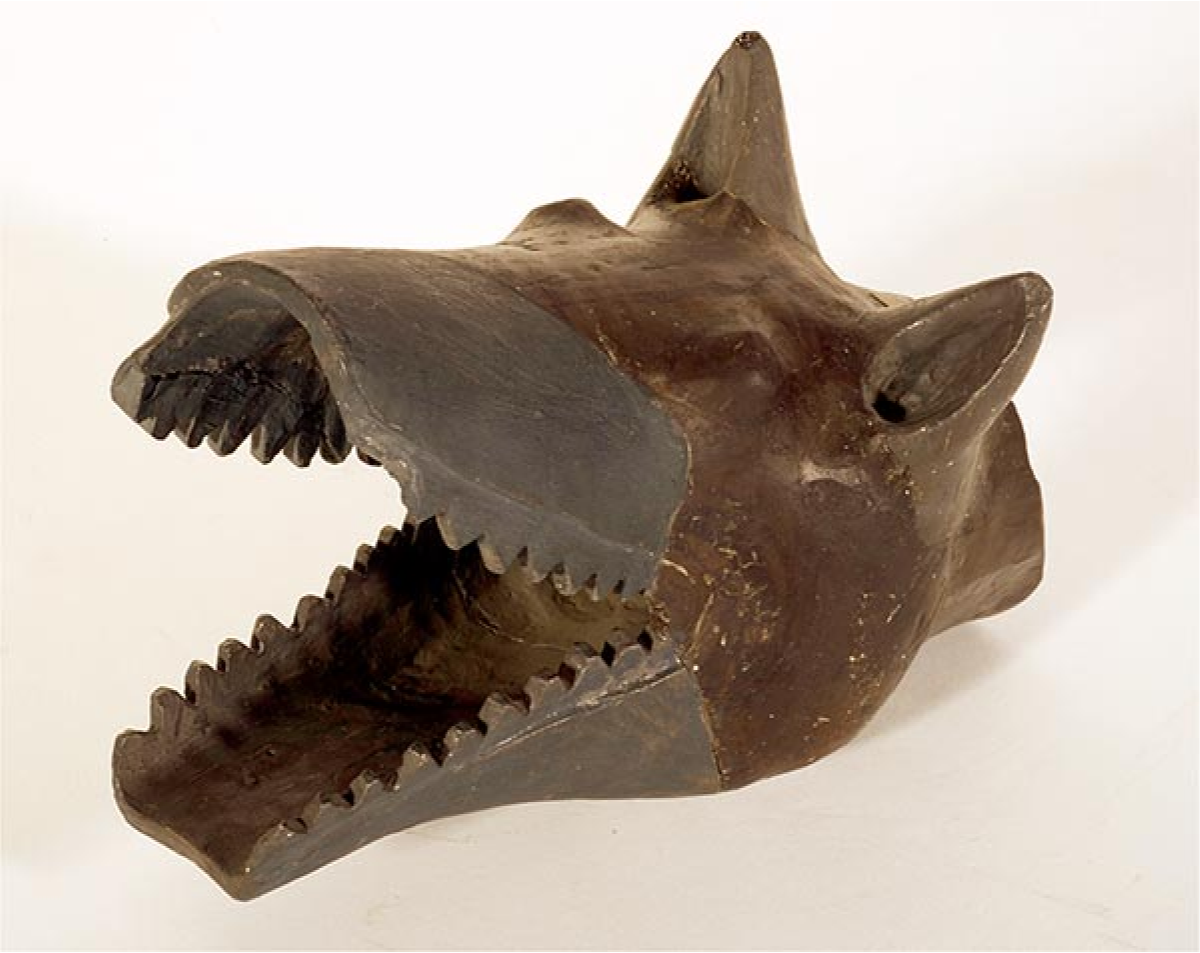
The value of the Celtiberians as mercenary troops was well appreciated by the Carthaginians, who employed substantial detachments in their various campaigns. Celtiberians were also used in the Roman armies which entered Spain in 218 BC at the beginning of the Second Punic War, though they proved to be somewhat unreliable. By the end of the second century, with Carthage defeated and Rome now developing its hold over the Iberian lands, Romans and Celtiberians had become all too familiar with each other's strengths and weaknesses.

For the next seventy years, in a long-drawn-out war of attrition, interspersed with peace treaties and revolts, Rome was drawn deeper and deeper into the territories of the Celtiberians and Lusitanians. Some indication of the devastating scale of the conflict is provided by Tiberius Gracchus, who could claim to have destroyed 300 Celtiberian hill towns in his single expedition of 179–178 BC. A brief respite followed, but after the revolt of the Celtiberians and Lusitani in 154 a further series of bitter engagements ensued, the native opposition being rallied and brilliantly led for a time by the Lusitanian war leader Viriathus. The final stage began in 143 BC, by which time the Lusitanian campaign had been separated from that against the Celtiberians, and culminated in 133 with the destruction of the Celtiberian stronghold of Numantia after a long and bitter siege. Although it was to take more than a century for the whole of Iberia to be brought under Roman control, the destruction of Numantia and the selling of its survivors into slavery effectively marked the end of organized Celtiberian resistance.

During the second century Rome had come to understand and respect the Celtic peoples of Iberia. They were characterized as fearless, ferocious warriors who fought with a total disregard for their own safety: their cavalry was awe-inspiring and they were capable of producing charismatic war leaders like Viriathus. They were also bound by their overriding belief in the sacred nature of hospitality. In stressing the valour and hospitality of the Celtiberians, the Roman writers were providing a familiar caricature of the Noble Savage, but there can be little doubt that these aspects were deeply embedded in the social native system. It was this, as well as their language, which allowed the classical authors to believe the Celtiberians and the Celts of temperate Europe to be one people.



13.1 The Celtiberian hillfort of Numantia, in the Ebro valley in north-eastern Spain, had taken on the appearance of a Mediterranean town by the beginning of the second century BC, with a regularly laid out street grid defining insulae of closely packed houses. The settlement stood out against Roman advances and was eventually taken by Scipio in 133 BC after a long siege during which time, it is said, the inhabitants were forced to resort to cannibalism.



13.2 A wolf’s head made from baked clay found at the native hill town of Numantia, Spain. The head is the mouth of a trumpet similar to the *carnyx*. Second to first century BC. Museo Arqueológico Nacional, Madrid.

The Unstable Equilibrium: 133–60 BC

For seventy years or so the Roman frontier with the Celtic world remained reasonably stable, allowing complex systems of interaction to develop. Trade, as we have seen, expanded quickly, while a host of treaty relations negotiated with individual tribes established a delicate network of obligations and expectations which could be manipulated to the advantage of any party with the wit to do so. It was a time of bonding and learning.

Inevitably there were tensions, and these erupted into bouts of outright aggression. In Transalpine Gaul, the initial campaigns against the Ligurians, the Salluvii, and the Vocontii in 124 and 123 BC, which led to the annexation of the coastal region, had quickened, to be followed up in 122 and 121, when Cn. Domitius Ahenobarbus routed the Allobroges and Arverni, bringing under Roman control the Rhône valley as far north as Geneva. The creation of a port on the lakeside with timbers felled between 123 and 120 BC is almost certainly to be seen as a native response to the new commercial opportunities which the Roman presence offered. Some years later a firm control was taken of the western trade corridor—the Carcassonne Gap and Garonne—when in 106 Caepio was sent with an army to put down a revolt among the Volcae and Tectosages. As a result Tolosa (Toulouse) was sacked, and thereafter the town and its territory were absorbed into the Province.

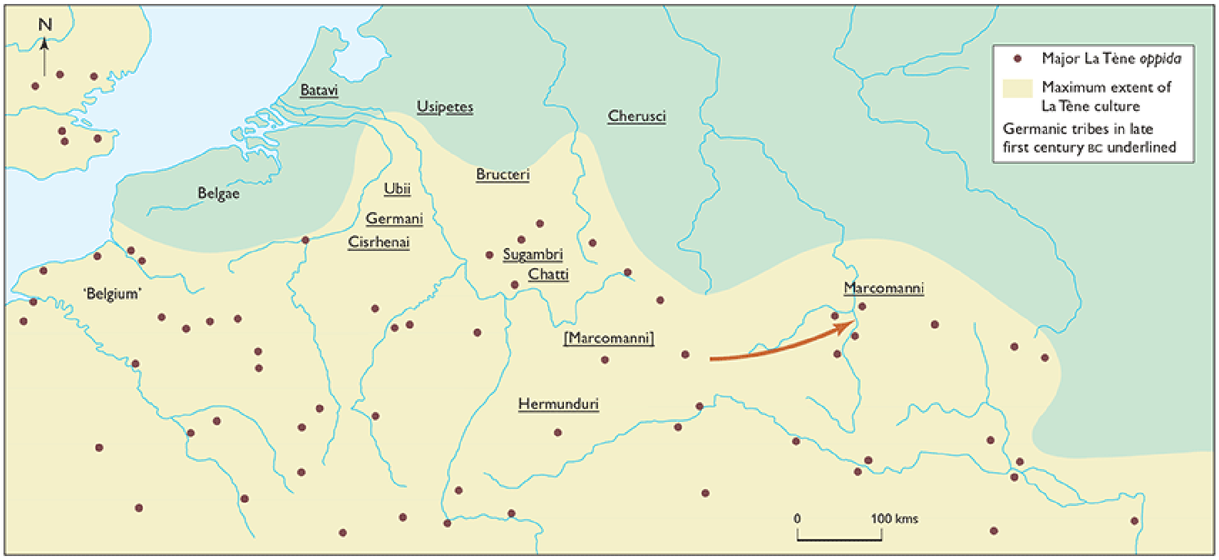
Old Greek cities of the coastal zone, new Roman creations like the colony of Narbo Martius (Narbonne) founded near a native town in about 118 BC, and the commercial annexation of important native centres like Tolosa, Vienna (Vienne), and Geneva provided the infrastructure necessary for the aggressive trading ventures of the Roman entrepreneurs who flooded into the Gaulish province. An interesting insight into these times is provided by the court case in which Cicero defended Fonteius, praetor of Transalpina, in 75–73 BC, against charges of extortion made by members of the local community. The details are obscure, but in essence Fonteius stood accused of levying an unofficial tax, to fill his own purse, on the movement of Italian wine destined for the Celtic market. In his defence of Fonteius, Cicero is at pains to denigrate the accusers, playing on all the prejudices of a Roman Celtophobe—they are noisy and arrogant, their manners and language are uncouth, and they wear trousers! More to the point, their ancestors had attacked Rome and Delphi. Thus they are barbarians and cannot be considered on the same level as a Roman citizen. If a civilized man like Cicero could present the Gauls in this way, even allowing for a lawyer’s distortion, what must have been the attitude of petty officials and merchants?

A little later, in 63 BC, the Allobroges sent commissioners to Rome to complain of maladministration. The discontent among Celtic tribes was well known in Rome and an attempt was made to involve them in the conspiracy of Catiline, but in the event the Allobrogian emissaries decided against rebellion. The incident is interesting in that it shows how Roman factions might choose to manipulate Celtic discontent in their own interests, but it also demonstrates the reluctance of tribes who had experienced only two generations of Romanization to disrupt the equilibrium which had emerged, even though they had serious grievances.

The situation in the fringes of the eastern Alps is less clear. The close relationship which had been established with the kingdom of Noricum created a degree of stability in the western flank of the region, but the main axis of communication, which led northwards from Aquileia to the Sava valley and beyond, remained in the hands of native tribes, principally the Taurisci and Iapodi. When, from time to time, the flow of trade was threatened, Roman troops were sent in to restore order. In 129 BC a force reached Siscia (Sisak in Croatia), but without attempting to take control of the territory. Policing of this kind continued until the middle of the first century BC. In 88 the Roman commander Scipio Asiagenus moved further east against the Scordisci, who were decisively defeated but with no territorial advantage to the Romans.

For the last two decades of the second century many tribes in central and western Europe suffered disruption from the migratory movements of the Cimbri and Teutones, the names which classical authors give to a mobile horde which originated somewhere to the north of the Lower Rhine. While the composition and exact ethnic origins of these peoples remain unclear, that they emerged from the land broadly known to the Romans as *Germania* gave rise to the belief that they were Germans and thus were distinct from the Celts. The divide was a convenient one for commentators like Caesar and Tacitus to use, and for them the Rhine marked the boundary between the two peoples. The actual situation was far more complex and it is doubtful if any significant ethnic divide existed, at least before the middle of the first century BC. Celtic tribes had long occupied the Middle Rhine, Bohemia, and Moravia, and Celtic enclaves had established themselves in southern Poland. Caesar also acknowledged that Germanic tribes occupied lands west of the Rhine and that there was some admixture with the northern groups of Belgae who lived between the Seine and the Rhine. While in terms of material culture, socio-economic structure, and language the inhabitants of the North European Plain differed from the Celtic communities further south, there was a wide zone between where one graded into the other.

One way to view Europe in the second century BC, as we have argued in Chapter 12, is to see it as a series of peripheries of decreasing social and economic complexity the further one moved away from the Mediterranean. Close to the Roman frontier the groups were oligarchies practising an advanced market economy. Further out they were kingdoms focused on *oppida*. These graded outwards into a zone where status was still expressed by prestige goods burials and where the many defended settlements suggest a more fragmented organization. Beyond this in the northern parts of Belgica and the North European Plain organization seems to have been simpler and the people more warlike. This last zone, broadly speaking, is that which the classical writers designated as ‘German’. What can be deduced of Germanic society from Julius Caesar, and from the more specific accounts of Tacitus written 140 years later, gives the impression of communities differing little from the Celts of the fourth and third centuries. In other words, degree of social complexity cannot be taken as a distinguishing factor between Celt and German. If a single characteristic is required, it can only be language. But apart from recourse to chronologically ill-focused maps of Celtic and Germanic place names, there is no sure way of distinguishing which tribes were German-speaking or, indeed, were bilingual. All we can do is to accept the ethnic identifications made by the Roman commentators.


N
Batavi
Usipetes
Cherusci
Belgae
Ubii
Germani
Cisrhenai
Bructeri
Sugambri
Chatti
‘Belgium’
Marcomanni
[Marcomanni]
Hermunduri
0
100 kms
● Major La Tène *oppida*
Maximum extent of La Tène culture
Germanic tribes in late first century BC underlined

13.3 Map to illustrate the changing boundary between ‘Celts’ and ‘Germans’.

The movement southwards of the Cimbri and Teutones is the first recorded movement of Germanic peoples into the territory of the Celts. It reflects an early stage in a series of southward expansions which culminated in the massive migrations between the third and the fifth centuries AD. Caesar's often-quoted rationalization, that Gaul would have to be taken over by the Romans if it were not to become Germanic, may have been an unbiased interpretation of the evidence he had before him.

In Gaul the situation reached a critical point when a German tribe, the Suebi, led by Ariovistus, crossed the Upper Rhine to support the Sequani in their struggle against the Aedui. The event helped to precipitate Caesar's intervention in Gaul. It was at precisely this time that Burebista led a huge force of Dacians westwards across the Great Hungarian Plain into Transdanubia, devastating the Boii and Taurisci, and establishing control of the crucial route westwards of the Danube bend.

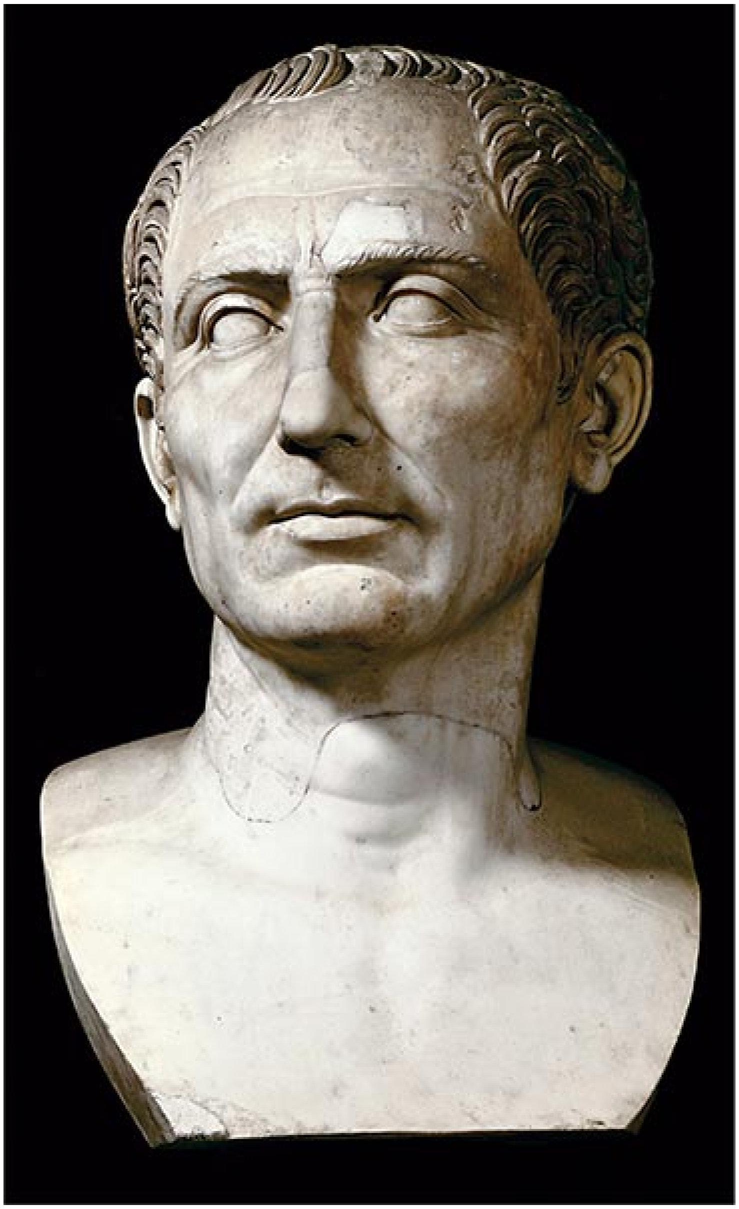
These two events, coming together in 60–59 BC, caused turmoil among the Celtic tribes of the Alps and Gaul.

The Conquest of Gaul: 60–50 BC

In 59 BC Julius Caesar was given command of the province of Cisalpine Gaul and Illyricum for an exceptional period of five years (which he later had extended for a further five years in 55 BC). To this province the Senate added Transalpine Gaul at the urging of Pompey. Thus in one stroke Caesar was provided with a brief that gave him control not only of the full sweep of the land approaches to Italy but also of virtually the entire frontier between Roman territory and the surrounding Celtic tribes. He was, therefore, able to choose whether to focus first on the Germanic threat in the western Alps or the Dacian threat in the east. His choice of Gaul may have been because he really believed there to be an immediate threat to Rome's security but it is difficult to believe that he was not influenced by his knowledge of geography. The circumscribed nature of Gaul and the ease with which the entire territory could be annexed for Rome would have been a great attraction.

Another factor was surely economic. Gaul, as we have seen, provided Rome with an immensely valuable market where slaves and other commodities could be had in plenty in exchange for Italian agrarian surpluses especially wine. Some indication of the volume of this trade is given by the tens of thousands of Italian wine amphorae which found their way into free Gaul before the conquest. When Cicero wrote, ‘all Gaul is filled with traders, is full of Roman citizens’, it was probably a fair reflection of the state of things. The threatened instability caused by Ariovistus’ interference, together with the threatened migration of the Helvetii and their followers, which would also have left a dangerous vacuum on the doorstep of Cisalpine Gaul, provided ample reason for Caesar to intervene. By defeating the Helvetii, driving the remnants of the migrants back to their Alpine homeland, and winning a decisive battle over the massed Germanic tribes commanded by Ariovistus, he was protecting Roman commercial interests as well as establishing a raison d’être for campaigning in Gaul.

The subsequent course of the Gallic War was conditioned by many factors. The prime motivation was Caesar’s need to establish military prestige and thus to build a power base, while at the same time amassing booty in order to pay his debts. The way he chose to pursue the war suggests a carefully devised strategy designed to leave the principal markets of central Gaul intact for the Roman entrepreneurs while taking control of the entire northern coastal region from the Loire to the Rhine. By doing this he would open up new markets with the British Isles, which were rumoured to be a prolific source of desirable raw materials. Thus, in his second campaigning year, 57 BC, he moved directly into Belgic territory, where, using the friendly Remi as a stable base, he marched first against a massed force commanded by the Bellovaci, and then against the Nervii and the Aduatuci, successfully destroying all opposition and acquiring among the booty some 53,000 prisoners, who were all sold as slaves. While the Belgic campaign was being fought, Publius Crassus had been sent with a legion to the Atlantic seaboard, where he received the submission of all the major tribes of Armorica and Lower Normandy. The stage had been set for a season of careful consolidation and planning before the invasion of Britain in 55 BC.



13.4 Julius Caesar, 100–44 BC, conqueror of Gaul. Museo Farnese, Rome.

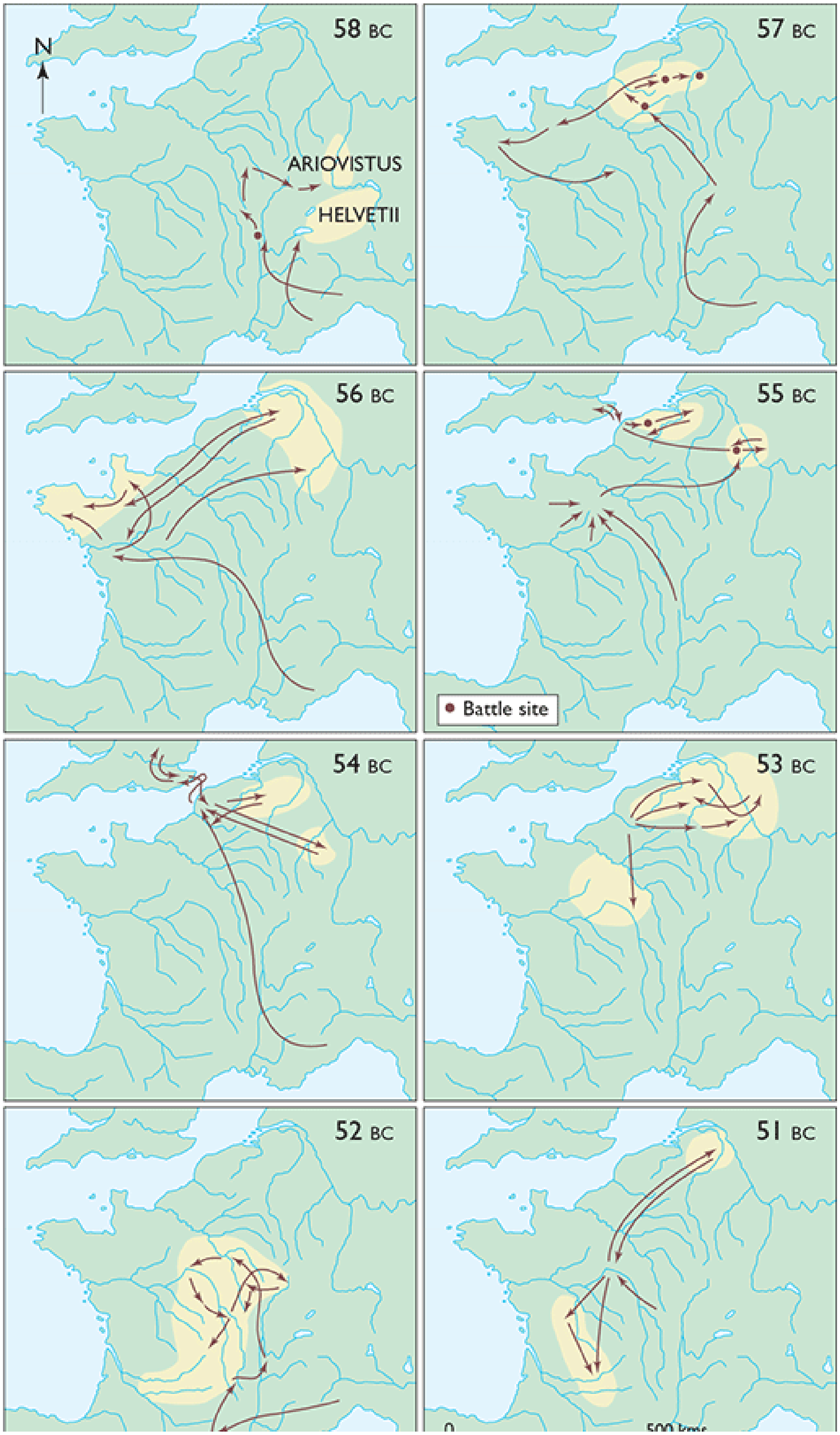
Rebellion among the Armorican tribes, however, upset the plan. Their submission to Crassus had been nominal, and it may well have been news of the intended Roman invasion of Britain that sparked off the revolt. For centuries the Armorican tribes had had a close trading relationship with Britain: its imminent disruption by Roman intervention could have been sufficient cause to try to thwart Roman efforts through active opposition. This may also have been the reason why the Aquitani chose to rebel. They too were an integral part of the Atlantic trading system, since they commanded the crucial route node between the ocean, via the Gironde, to Tolosa and the Mediterranean. Any threat to disrupt the lucrative Atlantic trade was a threat to their livelihood. Some such fear may well have spread the flame of revolt though Caesar makes no mention that he believed this to be so.

In the event Caesar soon had the situation well contained: Crassus was sent in spring to subdue the Aquitani, while Caesar moved against the tribes of Brittany with a specially constructed fleet, focusing his energies on the Veneti, who appear to have been the main instigators of the uprising. Sabinus, meanwhile, was given the task of bringing the tribes of Lower Normandy to heel. Caesar's treatment of the Veneti was particularly savage. All the elders were put to death and the rest of the fighting force who surrendered were sold as slaves. 'I decided that they must be punished with particular severity,' wrote Caesar, 'so that in future the Gauls would have greater respect for the rights of envoys.' No doubt the confiscated property and the proceeds of the sale of slaves were an added incentive to his decision to teach the leading tribe such a harsh lesson.

There was just time at the end of the summer for a force to be sent to the maritime Belgic tribes, the Morini and Menapii, who had not previously come to terms. The control of this territory was crucial to the successful invasion of Britain, but it was too late in the season to complete the operation before the winter rains set in. Had the Veneti not rebelled, the whole of the coastal zone would probably have been firmly under Roman command and the preparation for the invasion of Britain well advanced. As it was, 'after ravaging all the enemy's fields and burning their villages and farm buildings', Caesar put his army in winter quarters spread out among the tribes of Lower Normandy.

At this stage in his command it was crucial for Caesar to be able to present some spectacular successes to the Roman people and to remind them of the potential threat of the northern barbarians to the safety of Italy. In this way he would be able to gain agreement to the renewal of his command for another five years. Against this background it is possible to understand why, in 55 BC, he decided to take his force across the sea to Britain—an act which would have been regarded as verging on the superhuman—and to cross the Rhine into Germany, demonstrating not only his military skills but also the ferocity of these northern peoples whose ancestors had, only fifty years before, reached the Po valley.

In the fourth book of his *Commentaries* Caesar begins with a sketch of the warlike Germans, reminding his readers of the instability of the region. His description of the expansive power of the Suebi, driving other tribes like the Usipetes and the Tencteri from their lands to seek a new home south of the Rhine, is probably an accurate account of the volatile situation. After building up a fearful picture of the might of the Germans in battle, and throwing in the incredible figure of 430,000 for the size of the enemy force, Caesar presents the justification for crossing the Rhine: the Ubii, on the German side of the river, had asked for Roman protection, saying that a show of strength and support would strike fear into the rest of the German peoples and, by implication, discourage them from further southward movements. Caesar, in fact, spent only eighteen days across the Rhine, considering that, in that time, he had done all that ‘honour or interest required’.


58 BC
N
ARIOVISTUS
HELVETII
57 BC
56 BC
55 BC
Battle site
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52 BC
51 BC
0
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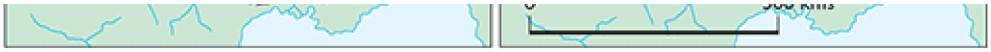


13.5 The progress of Caesar's conquest of Gaul during his eight-year campaign.

The German expedition had deflected him from his planned invasion of Britain, but even though it was late in the season he decided on what he presented in retrospect to be a military mission of reconnaissance. 'I thought it would be very useful merely to have visited the island to have seen what sort of people lived there and to get some idea of the terrain and harbours and landing places.' He goes on to offer the observation that very few people apart from traders crossed to the islands and they knew only the maritime regions. To prepare the way, while the fleet was being assembled, he sent a warship to reconnoitre and began to establish diplomatic relations with certain of the British tribes, using Commius, a chief of the Belgic Atrebates, as a mediator.

The campaign was not a particular success, in spite of Caesar's attempt to present it in a favourable light. He had clearly underestimated the strength of the British resistance and in particular the mobility of the British cavalry and chariots in battle. He had also seriously misjudged the effect of weather and tides in the Channel. To add to his difficulties, the Morini, in whose territory lay his European base port, attacked the returning troops—a consequence of Caesar's lack of preparation. To make sure that the failures of 55 BC were not to be repeated, he set the army to work throughout the winter, preparing a fleet for the next year's campaign.

The planned invasion of Britain in 54 BC was again deflected by trouble close to the German frontier: this time the powerful Treveri had refused to acknowledge Caesar's authority, largely because of an internal power struggle which was going on for leadership of the tribe. The situation was serious enough to require Caesar's personal intervention. Further troubles with the Gaulish nobility in his train caused additional delays, but eventually, during the summer, a huge invasion force set off in a flotilla of 800 vessels. The size of the expedition and the enormous input of labour that the preparations had required are sufficient to demonstrate the importance which Caesar attached to the venture. Indeed it could well be argued that his main aim from the outset of the Gallic War had been to subdue Britain.

The picture which he provides of that part of the island through which he campaigned was of tribes involved in continuous bouts of warfare but sufficiently cohesive to be able to elect one of their number, Cassivellaunus, as supreme war leader against the Roman threat. Opposition was fierce and at one point, while campaigning north of the Thames, the Roman force was in danger of being cut off from base by the concerted attack of four Kentish tribes. Assessing the dangerous situation in the light of the damage which his fleet had sustained in a storm and the fact that the campaigning season was drawing to a close, Caesar decided to withdraw, having negotiated terms with Cassivellaunus. The nature of the arrangements are not reported in detail, except that hostages were given and Cassivellaunus agreed not to harass his neighbours, the Trinovantes. The archaeological evidence for what was to follow suggests that the Trinovantes of Essex were probably given some kind of special treatment by the Roman authorities, which may even have amounted to a trading monopoly, since it is in their territory that the greatest quantity of Roman luxury goods thereafter concentrated.

On his return in the early autumn of 54 BC Caesar found northern Gaul in a dangerous state. General unrest, exacerbated by a poor harvest, had flared into a rebellion led by Ambiorix, one of the leaders of the northern Belgic tribe the Eburones. It was a confused period of marching and countermarching, during which time a substantial Roman force under Sabinus and Cotta was cut off and destroyed and only by rapid action was Caesar able to retrieve what had promised to be a rout. So serious was the situation that Caesar decided to spend the winter with his troops near Samarobriva (Amiens).

VERCI NGETORIX

13.6 Vercingetorix, a noble of the Arverni, became war leader in 52 bc, spearheading the revolt of the Gaulish tribes against Caesar. He and his followers were eventually besieged at Alesia and forced to surrender to the Romans. After years in a jail in Rome he was strangled as part of Caesar’s triumph. The coin is a gold stater of the Arverni struck in central Gaul *c*.51 bc.

It was a winter of discontent in Gaul. The annihilation of a Roman force had shown that Rome was not invincible: it provided hope for dissident elements throughout Gaul. ‘There was scarcely a time’, wrote Caesar, ‘when I was not anxious, and not receiving some report or other about plans for a rising among the Gauls.’ What is significant is that the discontent had spread far beyond the Belgic tribes. A force from Armorica threatened a legion, presumably that based in Lower Normandy, while the

Senones and Carnutes, strong and influential tribes who occupied the territory between the Seine and Loire, ignored Roman instructions and were regarded as being in open revolt. Apart from the Aedui and Remi there was no one that Caesar could trust. All this time the Treveri were stirring up trouble among their neighbours and among the Germans across the Rhine, but their leader, Indutiomarus, was killed in a skirmish while attacking the winter camp of Labienus. After this, wrote Caesar, 'my province of Gaul was somewhat more peaceful'.

With the winter not yet over Caesar moved decisively against the main centres of resistance. The northern Belgic tribes were the first to receive his attention with a rapid thrust against the Nervii. Following this success he summoned the Gallic Council. The Senones, the Carnutes, and the Treveri failed to attend—a failure which Caesar interpreted as an act of hostility. His first response was to bring the Senones and Carnutes to heel by a show of military strength, thus preventing the immediate threat of being encircled. Then he turned his energies against the Treveri and Ambiorix. First he moved into the territory of the Menapii at the Rhine mouth to establish control and thence to the Treveri, from where he crossed the Rhine again to harry the Suebi and to re-establish the subservience of the Ubii. After a brief stay he was back in the land of the Eburones engaging in systematic destruction and plunder, in which the Roman forces were joined by pillaging Gauls and by Germans who, seeing an opportunity, came from across the Rhine. It was an effective way to destroy the resistance of a people who would not come to battle.

The terror over, Caesar returned to the safety of the Remi, where he held an enquiry into the conspiracy of the Senones and Carnutes, bringing the proceedings to an end with the public execution of the instigator of the plot. The act was ill-judged, or at least ineffective. The unrest which had been simmering now boiled over again, the Carnutes taking upon themselves the leadership of a revolt more serious than any that Rome had previously experienced in Gaul. Caesar gives no reason why the tribe should have been such a focus of unrest, but we learn in another context that the annual assembly of the Druids was held there at what was considered to be the centre of Gaul. The place clearly had power in legitimizing pan-Gaulish decisions. Some such meeting, possibly under Druidic instigation, may have provided the context for concerted action against the Romans. The rebellion began with the murder of the Roman traders who had settled in the principal *oppidum* of Cenabum.

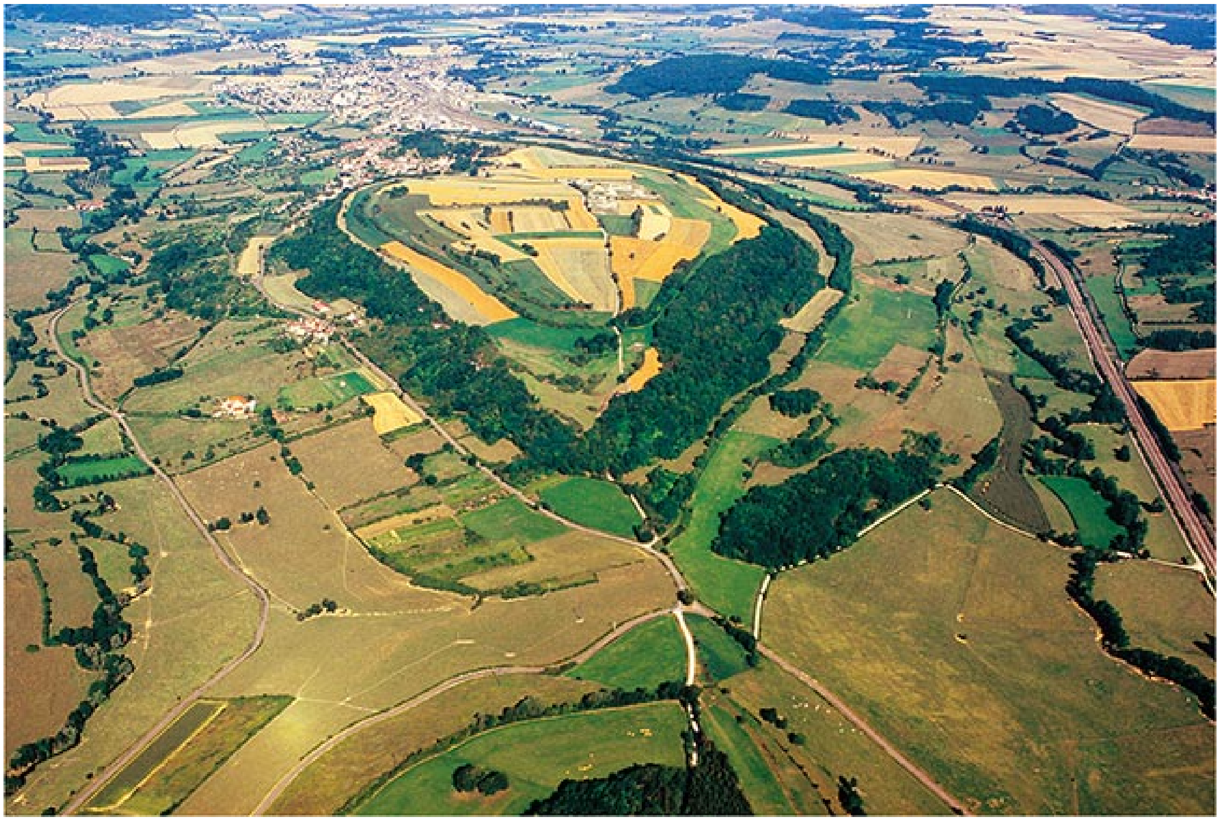
News spread rapidly to the Arverni, among whom a member of the elite, Vercingetorix, had set himself up as war leader. The event throws interesting light on the changing nature of Celtic society at the time. The Arverni were ruled by a democratically elected magistracy and, like many such tribes, were evidently aware of the ease with which the old social system, in which power was wielded by those who could command large entourages, could re-establish itself. The father of Vercingetorix, Celtillus, had actually been killed by his fellow tribesmen for wanting to become king. When Vercingetorix 'called his dependants together and had no difficulty in rousing their passions', he was taking the first step in elevating himself as his father had tried, unsuccessfully, to do. It is understandable, therefore, that his uncle and other leading men in the tribe should try to restrain him. He was expelled from the *oppidum* of Gergovia. But he persisted and gradually won over other Arvernians, soon gaining sufficient power to oust his opponents and set himself up as king. What we are witnessing, therefore, is the resurgence of the old social order made possible by the call for Gallic freedom. Once established, his support among other tribes grew rapidly, and Vercingetorix was acknowledged as supreme war leader.

Virtually the whole of central Gaul was up in arms against the Romans, placing Caesar in a very difficult position. His first action on reaching the Province, at the beginning of the campaigning season of 52 BC, was to establish the security of the western part of Transalpina, which was most at risk. Next, by leading his troops through the Cévennes against the Arverni, he added a further safeguard to the Province while causing a considerable distraction to the rebels.

Then followed a long period of marching and countermarching through those parts of central Gaul which hitherto had been largely free of Roman military interference. One by one the major tribal *oppida* were besieged and fell. Vellaunodunum, capital of the Senones, capitulated; Cenabum of the Carnutes was taken and destroyed; and the Biturigan *oppidum* of Noviodunum surrendered. Next it was the turn of Avaricum, the largest of the *oppida* of the Bituriges, to suffer Roman encirclement. The resistance of the townspeople was paid for with savagery when the Roman troops entered. Of the population of 40,000 only 800 escaped. In dealing with the more urbanized tribes of central Gaul, Caesar's tactic was simply to pick off the population centres one by one. Such an approach would have been impossible among the tribes of Armorica and Belgica, where this degree of centralization had not yet developed.

In the weeks to follow, news of the close-run battle at Gergovia and the defection of the Aedui to the rebellion caused the uprising to escalate. Robbed of Gallic support and unable to bring in new troops from Italy, Caesar resorted to inviting German cavalry groups to join his force. They were soon to play a significant part in routing Vercingetorix's cavalry and forcing him to withdraw to the *oppidum* of Alesia in the territory of the Mandubii.

At Alesia the Gaulish rebel force was besieged. In making his decision to defend himself on the hill, Vercingetorix was no doubt banking on the rapid arrival of a large relieving force which was now being amassed. According to Caesar, a Council of Gauls had been summoned but had rejected Vercingetorix's proposal for a universal call-up, instead deciding to prescribe the size of the force which each tribe was required to provide. Some forty-four different tribes are named, and the company, when finally assembled, amounted to 8,000 cavalry and 240,000 infantry. The supreme command of the force was divided between four war leaders, one from the Atrebates, two from the Aedui, and one from the Arverni. The coercive power of the Gallic Council in causing such a force to be created is impressive. Although it was, no doubt, due to the uniqueness of the occasion, that individual tribes respected the will of the assembled chiefs and that so many men could so readily be called to arms are indications that the spirit of Celtic society, evident in the migration period of the fourth and third centuries, had not been significantly weakened by the socio-political changes which were now taking hold of Gaul.



13.7 The plateau of Alesia was chosen by Vercingetorix as a secure place from which to resist Rome. As a result of the interest of Napoleon III, a massive campaign of fieldwork and excavation was mounted between 1860 and 1865, bringing to light details of Caesar's siege works. After the capitulation of Vercingetorix to the Romans in 52 bc, the hill developed as a small town.

The rest of the story may be briefly told. The arrival of the relieving force and its defeat by the Roman troops was quickly followed by the surrender of the Gaulish force in Alesia. All the captives, other than Arvernian and Aeduian, were distributed as booty to the Roman troops to be sold into the Roman slave markets. The 20,000 Arvernian and Aeduian prisoners were restored to their tribes as a gesture of goodwill. Caesar himself decided to spend the winter in the Aeduian capital of Bibracte, to rebuild relations with the tribe and to set Gaul in order. Vercingetorix was shipped to Rome, where, after spending six years in prison, he was strangled to add drama to Caesar's delayed triumph.

The war in Gaul was not yet over. During the winter Caesar had to deal with residual unrest among the Bituriges and the Carnutes. More serious trouble with the Bellovaci required firmer military action, after which

Caesar turned his attention once more on the Eburones, where the rebel leader Ambiorix was still at large. His tactics were the same as those used on his previous campaign in the area. ‘Detachments of legionary and auxiliary troops were sent out all over Ambiorix’s territory, killing, burning, and pillaging; everything was destroyed and great numbers of the people were either killed or taken prisoner.’

The final acts were focused in the west, where certain of the tribes of Aquitania had mobilized forces. The campaign culminated in the siege of the native *oppidum* of Uxellodunum. When eventually the defenders surrendered, all those who had carried weapons had their right hands cut off but their lives spared, ‘so that everyone might see how evildoers were punished’.

Thereafter mopping-up operations in various parts of the country extinguished any spark of resistance which may have survived. Hirtius, who wrote the eighth book of the *Commentaries*, concludes by telling us that Caesar completed his activities in Gaul by handing out valuable presents to the surviving Gaulish leaders. ‘He did not wish to impose any fresh burdens on them. Gaul was exhausted by so many defeats. Caesar was able to keep it peaceful by making the terms of subjection more tolerable.’ The reality must have been far more stark. Of an estimated population of six to seven million, about one million had been killed and another million sold into slavery. Among the remainder hardly a family would have been left unscarred. The resentment must have been deep and bitter.

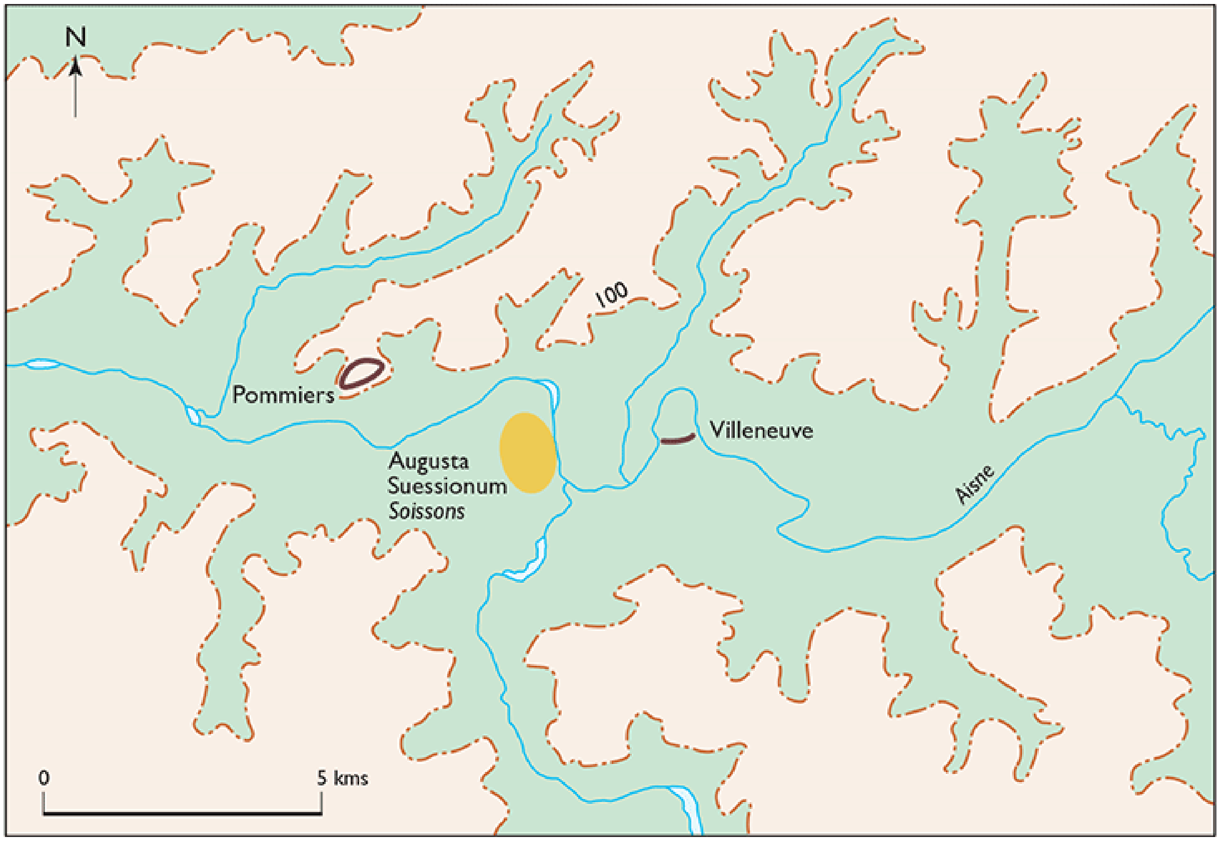
With Gaul now brought to heel, it is likely that Caesar’s attention would have turned to the problems posed by the expansion of Burebista, whose military ambitions had led him to annex great swathes of territory across what is now northern Hungary and to establish control of the narrow reaches of the Upper Danube. The Celtic *oppidum* of Bratislava seems to have been destroyed at about this time and a Dacian stronghold established nearby at Devin. The main westward thrust of this expansion came in 60–59 BC, at just the time that Ariovistus was causing trouble to the west of the Alps. The fact that Illyricum was added to Caesar’s command is, in part at least, an acknowledgement that the eastern Alpine region was likely to require firm military action. After his Belgic campaigns in 57 BC Caesar had hurried back to Illyricum, quite possibly to give some initial consideration to the problems developing on the northern border of this part of his sphere of responsibility. The fact that he had seriously underestimated the resistance of the Gauls meant that he could not pursue any plan that might have been forming and at the end of the Gaulish War he was drawn immediately into the Civil War so that the Dacian problem had to be left in abeyance.

That Burebista remained a serious threat is, however, shown by his overtures of support to Pompey in 48 BC. Thus, once Pompey had been overcome and some semblance of stability restored to Rome with Caesar firmly in control, plans for a Dacian campaign, and for the wildly ambitious conquest of Parthia, could be pursued. Caesar's assassination in March 44 BC brought these grandiose schemes to an end.

Consolidation and Expansion: 50 BC–AD 10

For more than two decades Gaul was left to nurse its wounds with relatively little interference from Rome, while the continuing Civil War claimed everyone's attention. During this time native systems continued. At Bibracte, capital of the Aedui, buildings were replaced by more elaborate structures modelled on the Roman house, the artisan quarters continued to develop, and the *oppidum* began to take on the appearance of a Roman town. In the less advanced regions of the north the Mediterranean overlay was less evident. In the Aisne valley, for example, the old *oppidum* of the Suessones at Pommiers seems to have been abandoned for a new settlement built in the bend of the river at Villeneuve-Saint-Germain, defended in native style by a rampart thrown across the landward approach.

While systems of government and the native economies were left more or less unhindered, except for the draining of the gold from the system by taxation, the economic demands of the Mediterranean were having a noticeable effect. Lyons was the hub of Gaul. It was already tied firmly to the Mediterranean by roads and the river Rhône: from here new roads were set out to augment the old river routes. One road to the west linked the centre direct to the Atlantic ports. Two other road systems thrust northwards, one to the Channel coast at Boulogne, the other through the territory of the Treveri to the Rhine. Both routes were of considerable economic importance in opening up direct access to new markets and also providing a means of rapid contact with troop concentrations in frontier regions. No doubt those tribes, like the Treveri and Suessones, who were able to command the routes could gain benefit from the volume of traffic and trade passing through. The distribution of the later Dressel 1B amphorae, which concentrate in these territories, provides a convenient demonstration of the benefits which this northern zone were now reaping. Many of the amphorae, together with the Italian bronze vessels necessary for wine-drinking, were finding their way into the graves of the native aristocracy. Once again the burial rituals of the elite were being used to demonstrate the conspicuous consumption of a prestige goods economy. This system was to last in the region until the end of the first century BC.



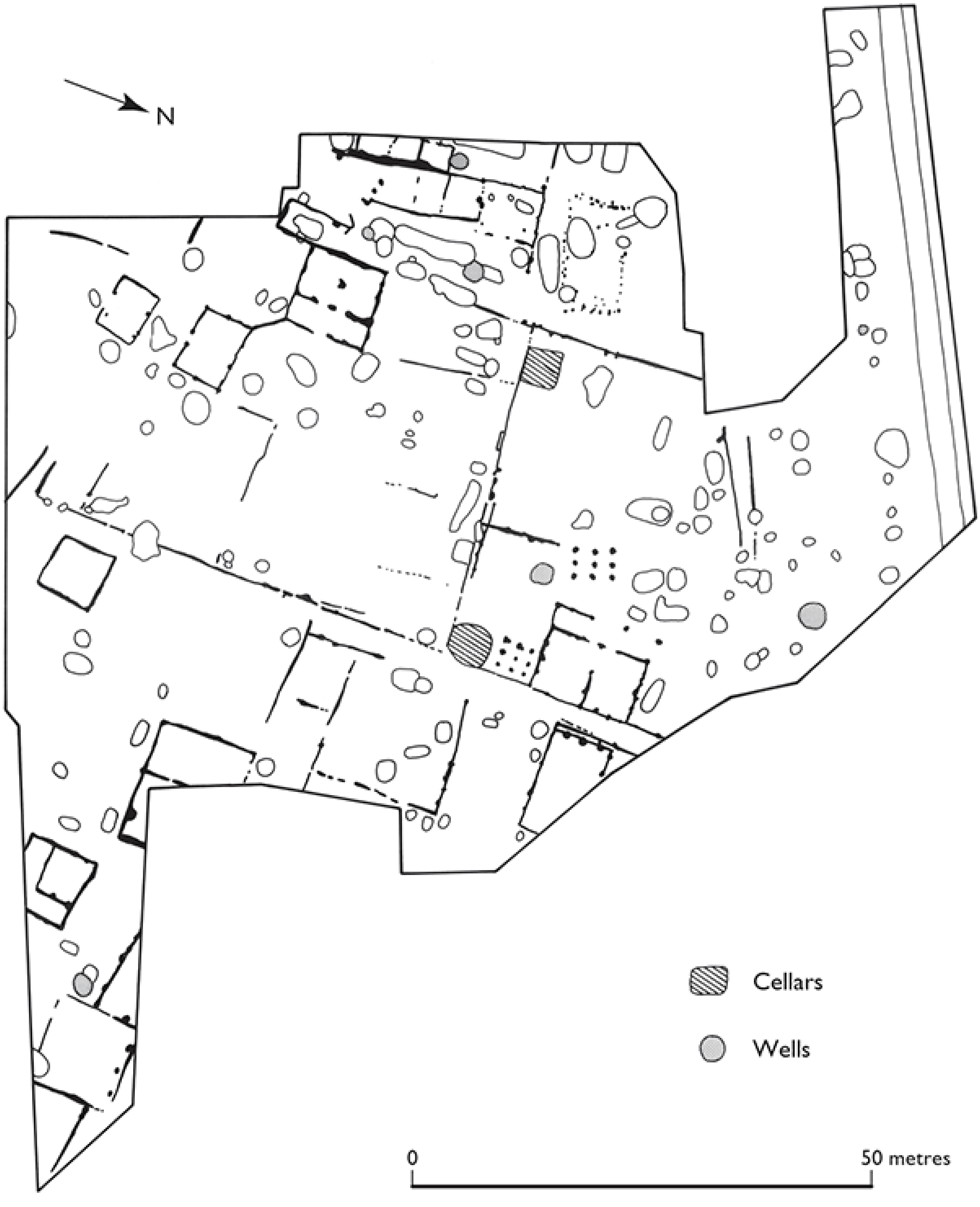
13.8 *Oppida* in the Aisne valley showing the three successive foci of population. Pommiers was occupied in the period up to Caesar’s conquest; Villeneuve-Saint-Germain was a post-Caesarian development but was abandoned when the Roman town was established at Soissons by Augustus.

Apart from a brief revolt in Aquitania in 39–38 BC, Gaul appears to have remained quiet. But widespread discontent arose in 27, when

Augustus, who had successfully destroyed all opposition to his leadership of the Roman state, began to organize a census of Gaul as a preliminary to imposing a new system of taxation. The presence of the emperor himself, however, prevented serious trouble from erupting and thereafter Romanization moved on apace.

The regions of the Pyrenees and the Alps still unconquered were brought rapidly under Roman control. The Augustan campaigns in north-western Iberia and in particular the Cantabrian mountains from 25 to 19 BC completed the conquest of the peninsula and in doing so freed larger numbers of troops from frontier duties.

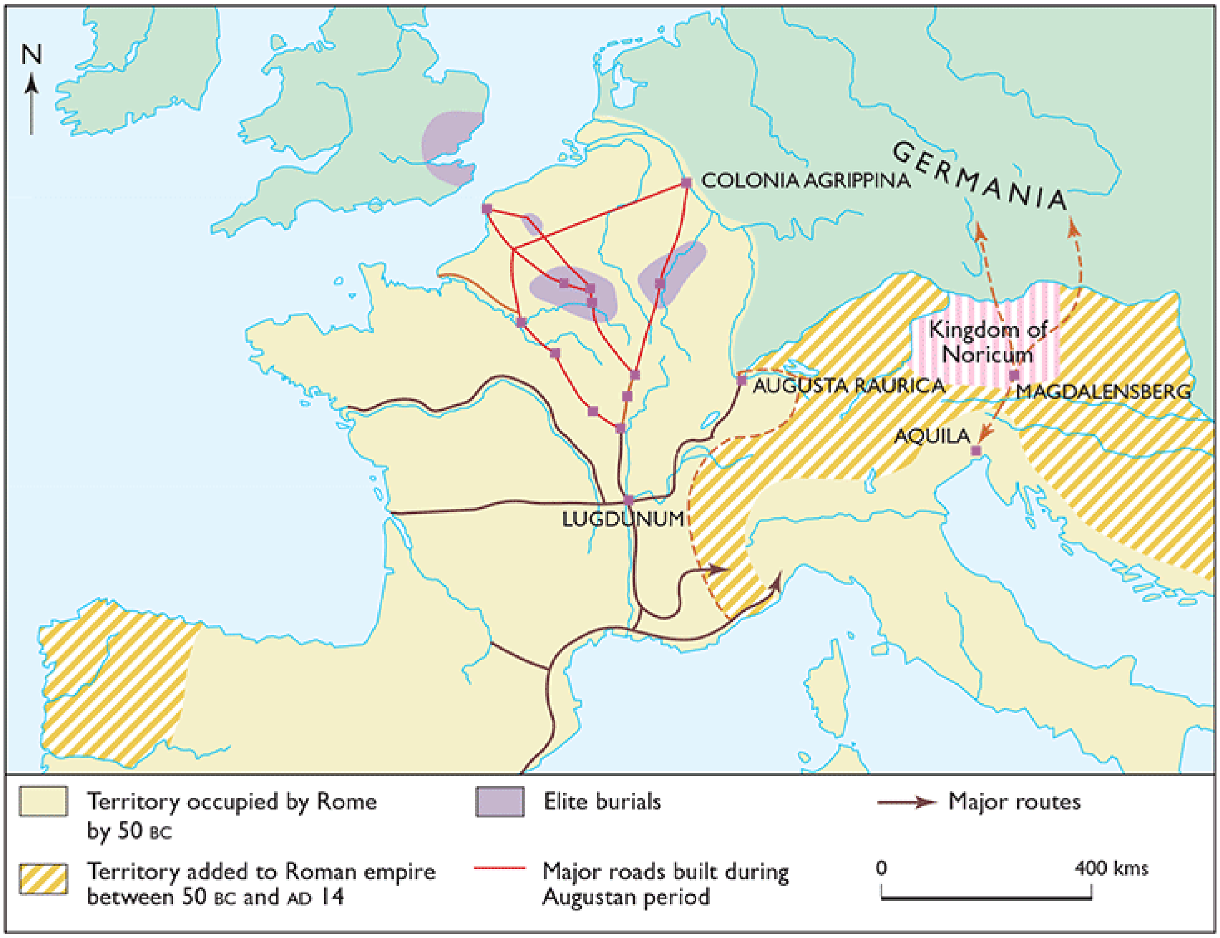
Augustus (known as Octavian before becoming emperor in 27 BC) had already attended to problems in the eastern Alps. In 35 BC he had moved against the Iapodi and had pushed on into Pannonia, in the next year taking the key location of Siscia (Sisak), which henceforth became the springboard for Roman campaigning in the region. In this way he was beginning to put into play plans which must have been in Caesar’s mind. The campaign against the Dacians was finally launched in 29–28 BC by Marcus Lucius Crassus. With the Dobruja under Roman control, much of the Balkans began to be taken in hand.



13.9 The defended settlement of Villeneuve-Saint-Germain, Picardy, France, was protected on three sides by the river Aisne and on the fourth by a rampart and ditch. Internally the buildings were carefully laid out. Occupation in the second half of the first century bc was short-lived.

In 15 BC Tiberius and Drusus led a major offensive into the eastern Alps. Noricum was formally annexed and the Rhaetians and Vindelici brought into the Roman sphere. The tribes of southern Pannonia, between the rivers Drava and Sava, were the focus of Tiberius' campaigns between 13 and 9 BC, during which time the province of Illyricum was formally instituted. In this way the Celtic peoples of Transdanubia began to be absorbed into the expanding Roman world. In 7 BC Augustus inaugurated a victory monument at La Turbie on the coastal road around the Alpes Maritimes. On it he recorded his victory over forty-four Alpine tribes. The erection of the monument symbolized the end of free Celts south of the Rhine. The incorporation of a few surviving enclaves, such as the remaining Boii in northern Transdanubia, in the early first century AD brought Celtic freedom to an end in Continental Europe.

The expansion of the Romans towards the Rhine–Danube frontier in the second half of the first century BC took place in parallel with the more gradual expansion of Germanic peoples in the north and Sarmatians in the east. The continued southern pressure of the populations of the North European Plain, which Caesar was to stay temporarily in the 50s BC, continued with the Germanic settlement of the Celtic regions of Bohemia and Moravia between 16 and 8 BC. The Germanization of these territories effectively brought to an end the large *oppida* and with it Celtic culture. Thus, while the strong Roman presence south of the Rhine–Danube axis prevented a further southward move at this stage, the territories on the north side of the rivers were open to settlement and filled rapidly with new tribes of Germanic origin. The absence of a firm ethnic frontier at the beginning of the first century BC had allowed a fluidity of movement. Once the Romans had established control along the two rivers, the ethnic divide was rapidly intensified by the tide of incoming Germans building up against the barrier of the frontier. This pressure was to continue until, three centuries later, the power of the Romans to resist it began to give way.


N
COLONIA AGRIPPINA
GERMANIA
Kingdom of Noricum
AUGUSTA RAURICA
MAGDALENSBERG
AQUILA
LUGDUNUM
Territory occupied by Rome by 50 BC
Territory added to Roman empire between 50 BC and AD 14
Elite burials
Major roads built during Augustan period
Major routes
0
400 kms

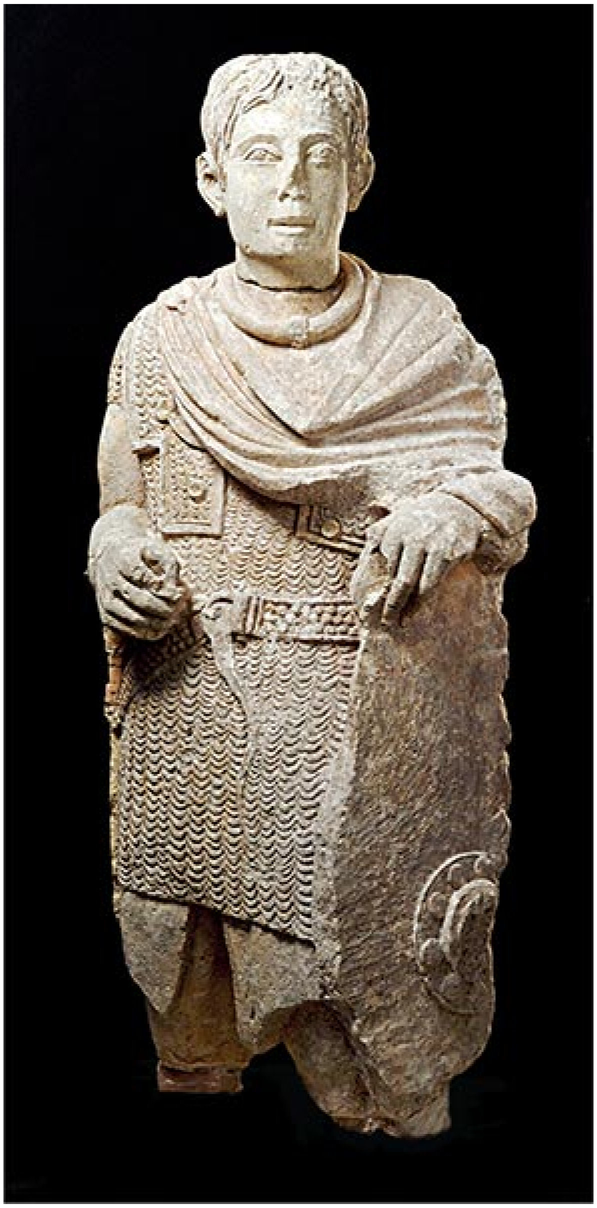
13.10 The political geography of western Europe at the end of the first century bc in summary.

In the east the constant influx of horse-riding peoples from the steppes, north-east of the Black Sea, continued with the western migration of Sarmatians along the Lower Danube valley into the region of the Great Hungarian Plain. The region was settled by a Sarmatian tribe, the Iazyges, in the early years of the first century AD. This movement was simply echoing the western migration of the Cimmerians and Scythians before them. The new settlers will have found themselves in an area where Celtic groups had integrated with indigenous populations. After the new wave of immigrants from the Pontic steppe had established themselves little of Celtic culture remained. Henceforth the Middle Danube, flowing between Transdanubia and the Great Hungarian Plain, formed the boundary between the Roman world and the eastern barbarians. Under the Romans some vestiges of the Celtic tribal and social systems survived; beyond they disappeared totally.

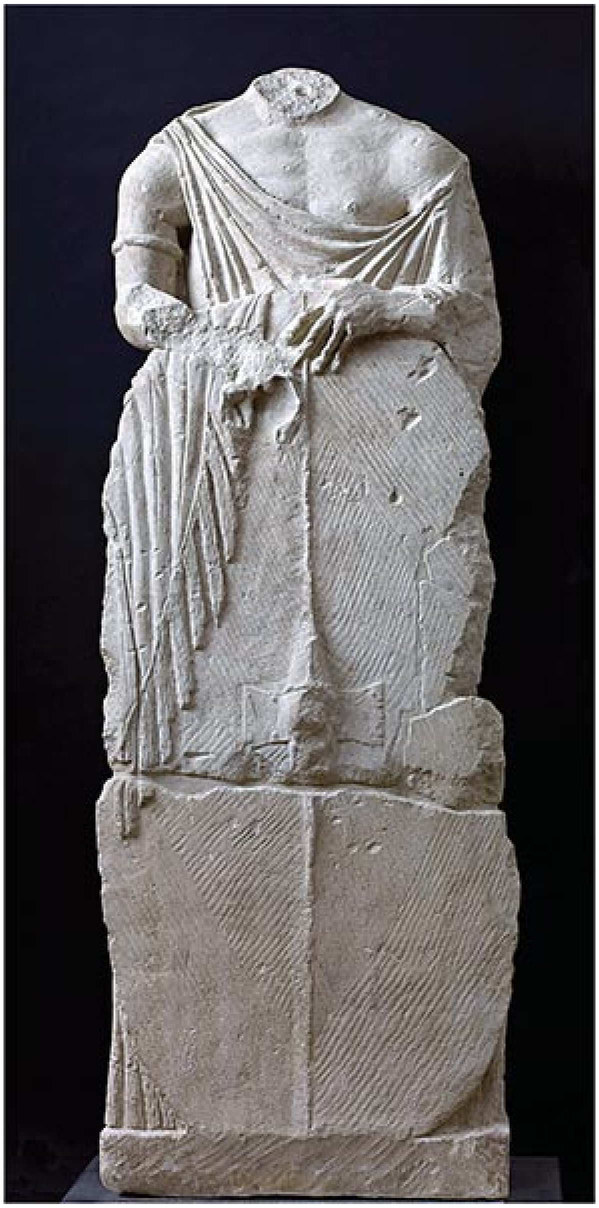
Romanization and Rebellion: AD 10–40

The Romanization of Celtic societies in Gaul, the Alpine regions, and Pannonia developed apace in the early first century AD. There had always been a tendency to ape selected behaviour emanating from the Mediterranean, and now Roman style and manners provided the Celtic elite with a new mode of expression in their very midst. The adoption of Roman building styles by the Aeduian aristocracy at Bibracte is a clear example, and it was not long before the population had migrated from their hilltop fortification to the new Roman foundation of Augustodunum (Autun) in the valley 20 kilometres away, where all the principal comforts of Roman city life were to be had and where their sons could be educated in the Roman manner. Even in the rather more primitive north, the *oppidum* built by the Suessones after the conquest at Villeneuve was abandoned for the Augustan town nearby at Augusta Suessionum (Soissons), founded in the early years of the Principate.

In the far west at Mediolanum Santonum (Saintes) a triumphal arch was dedicated to the emperor Tiberius and his heirs in AD 18 or 19 by Caius Julius Rufus, who records his ancestry back to his great-grandfather—a Celt with the name of Epotsoviridos. His grandfather Otuaneunos had been given citizenship by Caesar and had taken the names Caius Julius. Family histories of this kind were by no means rare among the urban aristocracy of Roman Gaul. Whereas 100 years previously a Celtic chief, like Louernius, would have demonstrated his status by feasts and gift-giving, now the same end could be achieved by paying for public monuments and proclaiming the fact through the Latin inscriptions which adorned them.



13.11 (*Left*) Statue of a Gaulish chief wearing a tunic of chain mail and a torc and carrying a shield. From Vachères, Basses-Alpes, France. Late first century bc . MusÃ©e Calvet, Avignon.



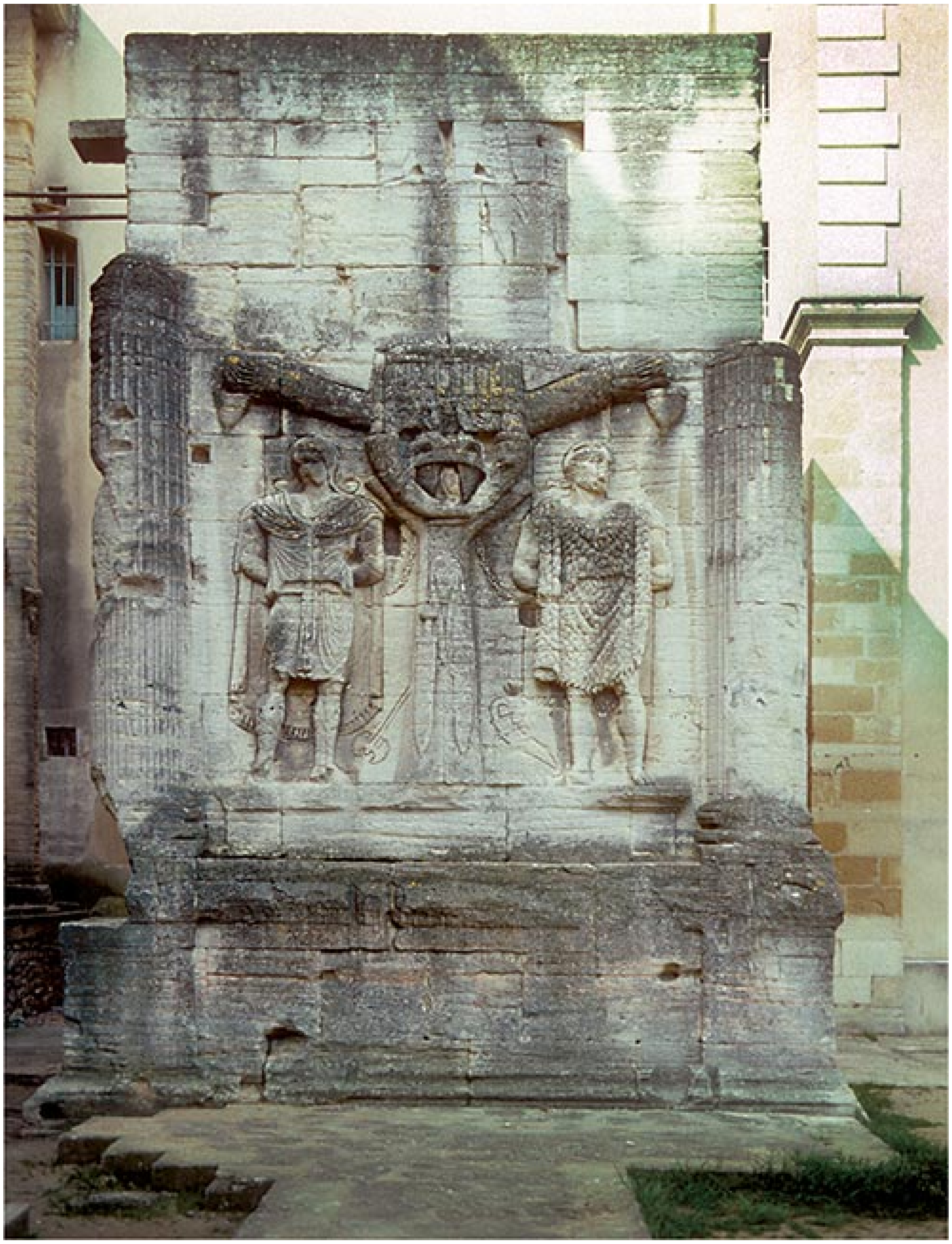
13.12 (*Right*) Statue of a Gaul carrying a shield of Celtic type. From Mondragon, Vaucluse, France. Late first century bc. MusÃ©e Calvet, Avignon.

There was little to prevent natives of Gaul from rising to positions of power within the Roman state. The Narbonnese province had long provided distinguished men. From the town of Forum Julii came L. Julius Grecinus, who gained the rank of senator under Tiberius. He may well have come from Celtic stock. His son Julius Agricola, born about AD 40, spent much of his life in the Celtic west, serving first in the army in Britain, then as governor of Aquitania. Later, as governor of Britain, he led the army into Wales and Scotland with distinction in the period AD 78–84. Beyond the old Province, in the Gaul conquered by Caesar, the social advancement of the native elite was significantly slower. It was not until a century after the conquest, in AD 48, that Claudius made his famous speech recommending that leading men of the Aedui should be admitted to the Roman Senate. Even then he met with ridicule from his peers.

For all the desire to emulate Roman ways and become part of the Roman system, there remained a deep-seated resentment which, given the scale and ferocity of Caesar's conquest, is hardly surprising. Natural sentiments of this kind were exacerbated by bureaucratic abuse—an ever-present feature of Roman civil administration. The provinces were an important source of wealth to provincial administrators, whose terms of office were short and whose rapacity was, in consequence, intensified.

Unrest was recorded from time to time, but the most serious outbreak of violence came in AD 20, when two members of the Gallic aristocracy, Julius Florus of the Treveri and Julius Sacrovir of the Aedui, orchestrated an outright rebellion against Roman rule under the banner of Gallic liberty. The actual reasons were more prosaic: Roman officials were behaving in an arrogant and oppressive manner and many individuals had become bound by debt to Roman moneylenders. The rebellion was serious but came to little. In the event Florus was defeated during flight and committed suicide, while Sacrovir and his followers, who had seized Augustodunum, finally killed themselves, having set fire to the town when defeat looked inevitable.

It is difficult to judge from the rather summary account of Tacitus how widespread the revolt was, but his observation that 'the seeds of rebellion were sown in almost every Gallic community' suggests that the situation may have been serious. These Gauls were, after all, the grandchildren of tribesmen decimated by Caesar, and there must have been much latent anger in the stories told of family exploits seventy years before. In the call for Gallic freedom and the suicides of the leaders in the face of defeat we are witnessing the last significant expression of the Celtic heroic ideal. The later revolt of Vindex and Civilis in AD 69–70 was an altogether more sophisticated act of political intrigue.

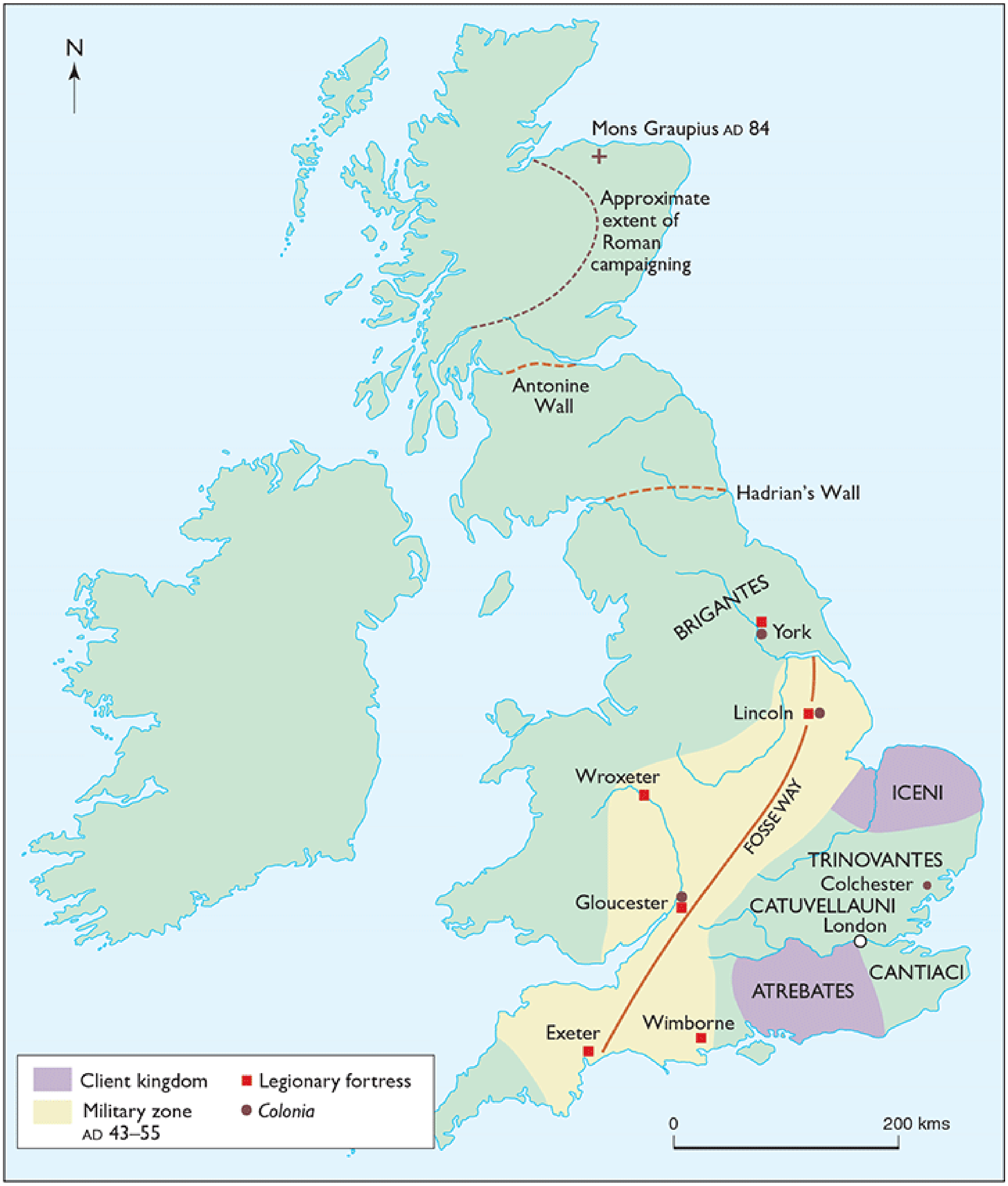


13.13 The Roman triumphal arch at Carpentras, Vaucluse, in southern France was probably set up in the early first century ad to commemorate a local victory against rebellious Gauls, who are depicted in chains beneath a victory monument.

Into Britain: AD 40–100

Julius Caesar's brief campaign in Britain in 55 and 54 BC may not have achieved a great deal from a military point of view, but the treaty relations he established with the tribes of the east coast, north of the Thames, had a lasting effect on the social and economic development of the south-east. The tribes on either side of the Thames estuary already had close relationships with their Belgic neighbours: indeed Caesar records that before the war Diviciacus of the Suessones had exercised authority in Britain, a fact which may suggest that Diviciacus was recognized as some kind of high king to whom tribute was due. During the war Britons fought alongside the Gauls, and the considerable number of distinctive Gallo-Belgic E coins minted as a war currency which found their way to Britain suggests that payment for services may have been made on an impressive scale.

With the war over, these long-established links continued to be maintained, and parts of south-eastern Britain, in particular the territories of the Trinovantes and Catuvellauni, developed close economic ties with their Belgic neighbours, sharing the same range of imported wine and wine-drinking equipment and the same customs of display in elaborate burial rituals. Largely as a result of this contact, which involved the export of those goods for which Strabo tells us Britain was famous—metals, corn, hides, slaves, and hunting dogs—that part of the country south and east of a line roughly between the Humber estuary on the east coast and Lyme Bay on the south developed systems of coinage modelled on Continental types. The heart of this region, south-east of a Solent–Wash axis, became politically and economically sophisticated with large nucleated settlements displaying many of the characteristics of the Continental *oppida*. Although this advanced core was composed of a number of tribes, by about AD 40 two main power blocks had emerged: north of the Thames the Catuvellauni ruled by Cunobelin were dominant, while to the south the Atrebates held sway. Conflict between these two polities had been going on for some while, and disputed territories seem to have changed allegiance more than once, but the Catuvellauni were in the ascendancy and Tacitus could describe Cunobelin as 'great king of Britain'.


N
Mons Graupius AD 84
Approximate extent of Roman campaigning
Antonine Wall
Hadrian's Wall
BRIGANTES
York
Lincoln
Wroxeter
FOSSE WAY
ICENI
TRINOVANTES
Colchester
CATUVELLAUNI
London
Gloucester
CANTIACI
ATREBATES
Exeter
Wimborne
Client kingdom
Military zone AD 43–55
Legionary fortress
Colonia
0
200 kms

13.14 Britain in the first century AD as it became increasingly Romanized.

The treaties set up by Caesar, and no doubt later developments about which we know little, established bonds of clientage between the native tribes and Rome, and these were used to political effect. A number of

British kings are recorded as being among the admirers of Augustus, and during the first decades of the first century AD several British rulers fled to Rome to ask for the help of the emperor in establishing their claims to power. The last recorded refugee was Verica, king of the Atrebates, whose flight, about AD 42, was caused by internal rivalries, possibly exacerbated by the increasing dominance of the Catuvellauni. The arrival of Verica provided the emperor Claudius with the excuse he needed to mount a British expedition—a flamboyant gesture which had been in the minds of the emperors since Caesar’s time. The motives behind the plan, like those of Caesar before, were mixed. Roman economic interests would have been to the fore, but the challenge of the mysterious island and the desire to impress were not far behind. Whether there was any real need to interfere in British politics to support pro-Roman factions is doubtful.

The first aim of the invasion force was to capture the Catuvellaunian capital at Camulodunum and then to fan out across the core of the south-east to take control of the territories which had come either directly or indirectly under the authority of the Catuvellauni and Atrebates. This semi-urbanized zone with its large *oppida* would be easy to integrate into the Roman system. The less centrally organized tribes beyond, the Durotriges, Dobunni, and Corieltavi, were also rapidly overcome, though not without considerable resistance from the Durotriges, and a military frontier zone was laid through all three territories, skewering them together with a military road—the Fosse Way—which ran from one military base at Exeter on the Channel coast to another at Lincoln on the east side of the island.

The organization of the province was put rapidly in hand. Most of the area seems to have been taken under direct state control, but two client kingdoms were created within: the Iceni of Norfolk were left under the authority of Prasutagus, a member of the royal family, while part of the Atrebates was put under the control of Cogidubnus, who, by virtue of his acquired names, Tiberius Claudius, presumably received his grant of citizenship from Claudius. Nothing is known of his ancestry but he may have been chosen from the Atrebatic aristocracy at the time of the invasion.

The opposition to the landing was orchestrated by Togodubnus and Caratacus, the two sons of Cunobelin (who had died a year or two before). Togodubnus was killed and Caratacus fled beyond the frontier area, into the Welsh mountains, where he stirred up active resistance to Rome for a further eight years, showing that charismatic war leaders could assume authority over tribes other than their own.

To contain the military problems which the occupation of the south-east of the island posed, the provincial authorities negotiated a settlement with a confederation of tribes, known collectively by the name of the Brigantes, who occupied the whole of northern England from coast to coast and who recognized the authority of a single ruler, Queen Cartimandua. The coalition seems to have been unstable, and in AD 51 Cartimandua took a decidedly pro-Roman stance by handing over the war leader Caratacus to the Romans. The anti-Roman faction, led by her estranged husband, Venutius, were no doubt incensed by the act. In the ensuing disarray a legion had to intervene to prop up the queen’s authority. The unstable equilibrium was maintained for a further decade until AD 69, when Venutius gained control by fomenting a revolt among the queen’s tribe and enlisting the help of other tribes in the anti-Roman cause.

While these events were going on, the English Midlands, Wales, and the south-western peninsula were taken under military control, the only significant opposition coming from the two major mountain tribes of Wales, the Silures in the south and the Ordovices in the north. Fighting was tough but the result inevitable. Far more serious was a revolt deep within the province led by Queen Boudica of the Iceni, wife of the client king Prasutagus. There had been a minor uprising in AD 48 when the tribe was disarmed but it does not appear to have been too serious. The events of AD 60–61 were on an altogether different scale. The immediate cause was the heavy-handed bureaucratic incompetence which followed the death of Prasutagus, when the authorities seem to have decided to terminate the client kingship, but the speed with which the revolt spread to most of the rest of the province implies a far more deep-rooted resentment caused by administrative abuses and the appropriation of tribal lands for the colonial settlement implanted in the *oppidum* of Camulodunum. A further factor, the impact of which is difficult to estimate, is that the revolt broke out at the precise moment that the Roman armies were in north-west Wales attacking the Druid sanctuary on Anglesey.

The revolt spread rapidly and was pursued with ferocity by the Britons, many of whom would have experienced the trauma of the conquest only seventeen years previously and the humiliation and abuse which had followed. The colony of Camulodunum, the town of Verulamium, and the port of London were destroyed and their inhabitants slaughtered. Boudica’s plea to the goddess Andrasta for assistance, and the subsequent impaling of female victims, suggest that the old Celtic gods still had a firm hold on the people. The final battle, in which the British force was soundly beaten, with its chariots, noise, clamour, and boasting, and its baggage trains from which the women and children could get a good view, would not have been out of place as a description of Celtic warfare four centuries earlier. The scale of the engagement can be judged from Tacitus’ estimate that 80,000 British died. The reprisals to follow put back the development of the province for decades.

Meanwhile the situation in the north of Britain had deteriorated and Cartimandua had finally to be rescued. Thereafter Roman campaigns beginning in AD 71 brought much of northern Britain, up to the line later chosen for Hadrian’s Wall, under Roman military control, and the scene was set for Julius Agricola, as governor of Britain (AD 78–84), to complete the subjugation of Scotland, fighting the last pitched battle against the army of Calgacus at Mons Graupius in the far north, on the south side of the Moray Firth. It was the last occasion when a Celtic army used chariots against a Roman force. The circumnavigation of Scotland and the acceptance of the submission of the Orkney Islands brought Agricola’s triumphant campaign to an end. Although the Roman hold on the north and west of Scotland was tenuous in the extreme, and a withdrawal to the Tyne–Solway line was soon considered advisable, Mons Graupius marks the culmination of Roman military achievement against Celtic peoples.

The old socio-economic division of Britain at the time of the conquest remained a significant fact of political geography throughout the Roman interlude. In the south-east the urban pattern continued and developed, even though the Boudican revolt caused a major disruption. Tacitus could write of this region:

> Agricola gave private encouragement and official assistance to the building of temples, public squares, and private mansions. . . . He trained the sons of the chiefs in the liberal arts and expressed a preference for British natural ability over the trained skill of the Gauls. The result was that in place of distaste for the Latin language came a passion to command it . . . and so the Britons were gradually led on to the amenities that make vice agreeable—arcades, baths, and sumptuous banquets. They spoke of such novelties as ‘civilization’, when really they were only a feature of enslavement.
>
> (*Agricola* 21)

Yet beyond, in the south-west, Wales, and the north, in spite of a network of forts and roads, the life of much of the population changed little. City life failed to gain a hold, traditional patterns of agrarian production and settlement continued, and the Celtic language with its rich oral tradition remained strong. Whether it was Roman lack of enthusiasm for instigating what they perceived to be unnecessary economic changes in the far-flung fringes or native resistance to change and a dogged adherence to traditional ways, it is impossible to say. The fact remains that in the western and northern fringes of the islands the old ways of life continued.

The Free Celts: Ireland in the First Century AD

Tacitus records the story of Agricola standing on the coast of western Scotland and looking across to Ireland and saying that he thought it could be conquered and held with a single legion. ‘In soil, in climate and in character and civilization of its inhabitants [Ireland] is much like Britain.’ He goes on to say that its ‘approaches and harbours are tolerably well known from merchants who trade there’. This much is clear from the quite detailed and accurate knowledge which the geographer Ptolemy was able to gather for his *Geography* in the middle of the second century, at least of the south, east, and north coasts. That trade with Roman Britain did take place is evident from the array of Roman objects, mainly trinkets of various kinds, found on Irish sites, and there is evidence to suggest that a major port-of-trade was established on the sea-girt promontory of Drumanagh, north of Dublin. There is, however, nothing to imply a Roman military presence on the island and little to suggest any significant exchange of population.

Something of the vitality of Celtic society in Ireland in the last centuries BC and first centuries AD can be gauged from the importance of the great ritual centres of Tara, Emain Macha, and Dún Ailinne, and, by implication, Cruachain. These were the social foci for huge territories and the places where kingship was legitimized, but outside these centres little is known of Iron Age society and economy. Indeed, pollen analysis has suggested widespread forest regeneration in the second half of the first millennium BC, which may indicate a significant decline in population during this time.

There remains, however, the wonderfully rich vernacular literature committed to writing for the first time in a final, if somewhat emasculated, form in the medieval period. While accepting all the problems of interpretation which this literature carries with it—whether the sagas are specifically Irish or pan-Celtic and how to distinguish the various overlays of later material—there can be little doubt that in the *Táin*, the earliest written version of which dates to the eleventh century AD, we see a reflection, albeit dim and distorted, of a Celtic epic which may, in many different versions, have been told from one end of Europe to the other. The survival of this oral tradition is one of the miracles of the Celtic tradition.

14

Celtic Survival

By the end of the first century AD most of the lands occupied by the Celtic peoples south of the Rhine–Danube line were under Roman occupation. To the north of the Danube the Celtic territories of Bohemia and Moravia had become Germanic, while further east in the Great Hungarian Plain and Transylvania the Celtic enclaves had been absorbed either within the Dacian state or by the incoming Sarmatian tribes. It was only along the extreme north-western periphery, in north and west Scotland and in Ireland, that Celtic-speaking communities continued to exist without the dubious benefit of Romanization or other interference.

Celts under the Romans: First Century BC to Fourth Century AD

The treatment of native Celtic societies by Roman administrators varied from region to region, but for the most part the newly imposed structures made good use of indigenous systems. Thus in Gaul the Augustan reorganization which divided the country beyond the Province (now Gallia Narbonensis) into Aquitania, Gallia Lugdunensis, and Gallia Belgica was reflecting directly the ethnic divides noted by Caesar when he distinguished between the Aquitanians, the Celts, and the Belgae. Below this tier of administration lay the individual *civitates*, which, almost invariably, were directly, or closely, related to existing tribal divisions, allowing much of the economic, social, and legal structure of the indigenous systems to remain in place. Those native towns which were well sited to become nodes on the newly imposed road system simply continued, while others in less favourable locations withered away to be replaced by new towns: Bibracte gave way to Autun and Villeneuve to Soissons in the Augustan period.

In the south-east of Britain the situation was much the same, though in the early stages of the occupation two large tribal units were left under the direct control of client kings. In East Anglia the Iceni were ruled by Prasutagus until his death in AD 60, and in the centre south a substantial part of Atrebatic territory was put under the control of Cogidubnus, who was styled 'rex' though he had been made a Roman citizen by Claudius. Cogidubnus survived as ruler faithful to Rome until the time of his death, probably early in the 70s. How the client kings were chosen is unknown, but they were probably members of the ruling native elite. In the fragmented tribal system of northern Britain it was left to Queen Cartimandua to attempt to maintain control under the protective eye of the Roman governor. These somewhat tenuous arrangements were probably intended as temporary measures, and, with the deaths or (in the case of Cartimandua) overthrow of the clients, the territories were formally absorbed into the Roman administrative structure.

The Roman system provided many opportunities for the native elites. The willingness with which the Gauls took to Roman education is noted by a number of contemporary observers. In Britain, Tacitus describes the deliberate process of Romanization in the somewhat scathing passage already quoted (p. 376). The reality of all this is reflected in Britain in an impressive building programme of the late 60s and 70s AD which saw the erection of the forum and basilica at Verulamium, public baths at Chichester, and the palatial residence at Fishbourne, while the native temple at Hayling was rebuilt to a similar plan in masonry and the sacred spring at Bath aggrandized on a monumental scale.

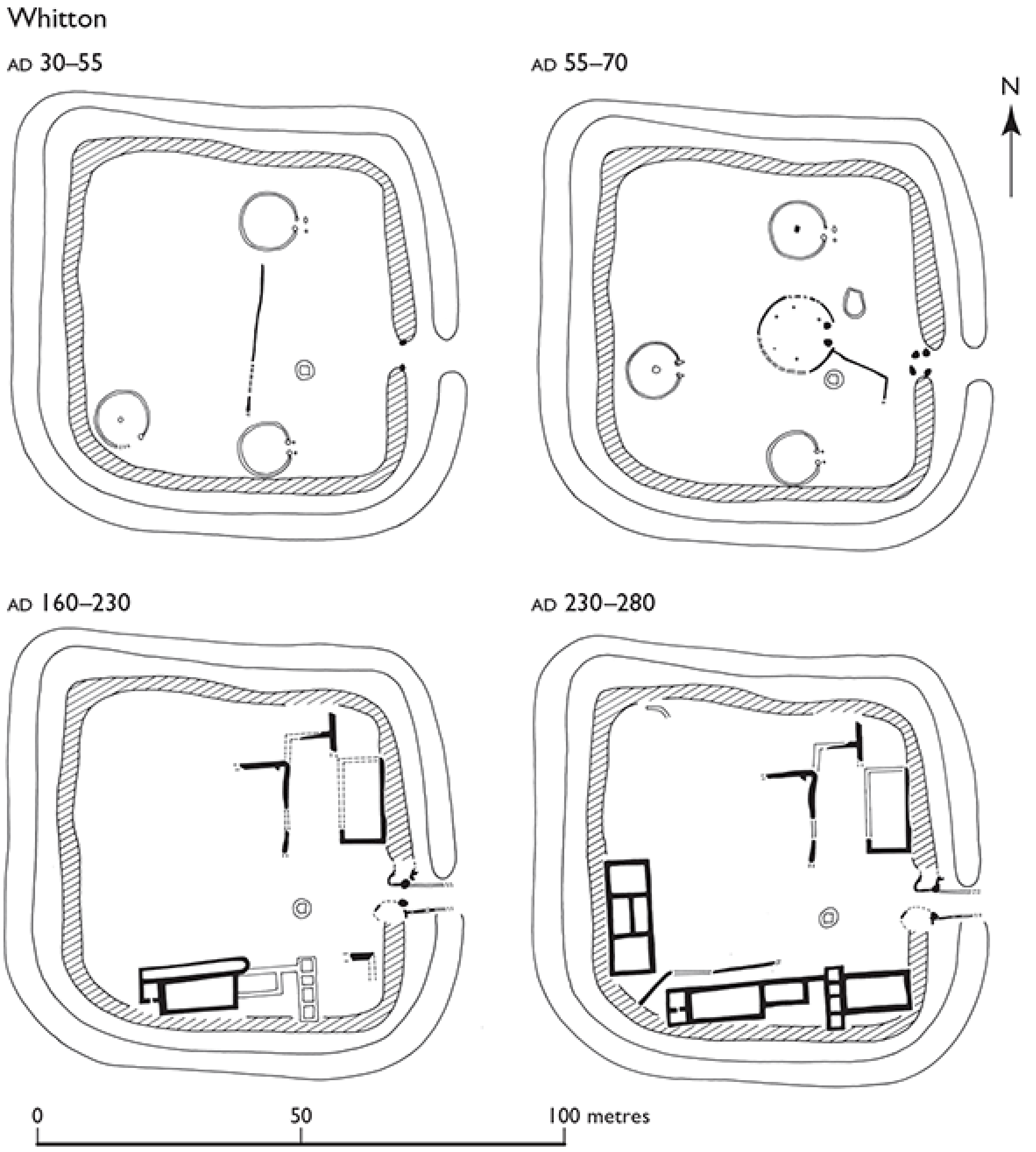
Much of the building work undertaken in Gaul in the Augustan and Tiberian period and in southern Britain in Neronian and Flavian times would have been under the direction of the Roman provincial authorities and may well have used military engineers and craftsmen, but building programmes provided the native elites with a way to demonstrate their patronage: their natural inclination for competitive display could now be channelled into public works.

The integration of native communities into the Roman system seems to have been thoroughly achieved throughout Gaul by the first century AD. Even in the remote west, in the Armorican peninsula, each of the main tribal territories was provided with an urban centre laid out on a regular grid system: Condate (Rennes) for the Riedones; Fanum Martis (Corseul) for the Coriosolitae; Vorgium (Carhaix) for the Osismes; Darioritum (Vannes) for the Veneti; and Condevicnum (Nantes) for the Namnetes. That none of these sites is known to have been a native centre before the Roman period, taken together with their formal planned layouts, suggests that the urban system may have been deliberately imposed. Some native centres, like Camp d'Artus, were abandoned altogether, while others, like Le Yaudet and Alet, remained in occupation though at an undeveloped level. The Romanization of Armorica is evident not only in the imposition of towns and a linking system of roads but in the development of a network of quite opulent villas.

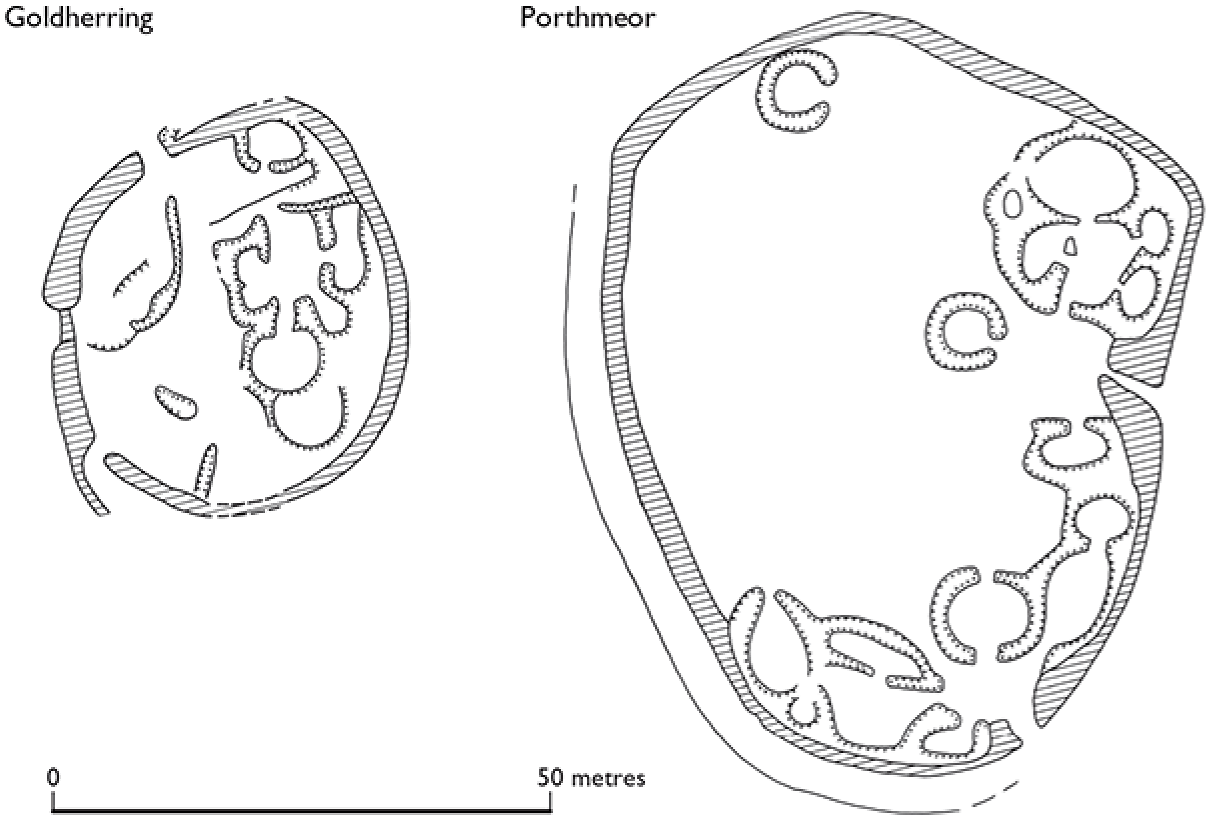
In Britain the situation was different. In the economically advanced south-east—that is, roughly south and east of the Fosse Way—the indigenous system was easily adapted to Roman administrative needs, with flourishing *civitas* capitals developing from native centres accompanied by a rash of villa building in rural areas around about. In many cases these villas evolved from settlements dating back to the first century BC or before. The continuity is impressive. Yet beyond this favoured south-eastern core, in the periphery, life was very different. Much of Wales and the north remained in military occupation. Some easing of tension allowed legionary bases such as Gloucester, Lincoln, Chester, and York to be developed as *coloniae* to provide civilian urban foci, while others such as Exeter and Wroxeter developed as urban and administrative centres without the benefit of colonial status. But over much of northern Britain and Wales the Romanized style of civilian development characteristic of the south-east failed to take hold. The only exception was the southern coastal strip of Wales fronting the Severn estuary, where small towns were established at Caerwent and Carmarthen and a few villas developed from native settlements. In the south-west peninsula of Devon and Cornwall the lack of Romanization, after a brief military occupation in the first century, is particularly striking. West of Exeter the native socio-economic system simply continued unhindered.

In Britain and Ireland, therefore, we can recognize three distinct zones: the Romanized core, with its focus on the commercial and administrative centre of London, where an urban system was firmly in place; a peripheral zone, including the south-west peninsula, Wales, and northern Britain up to the Clyde–Forth line, which was under Roman authority but was substantially un-Romanized; and a free zone beyond, including the extreme north of Britain and all of Ireland, where native systems continued unhindered. The degree to which Celtic culture survived was directly related to the intensity of Romanization reflected in these three zones.

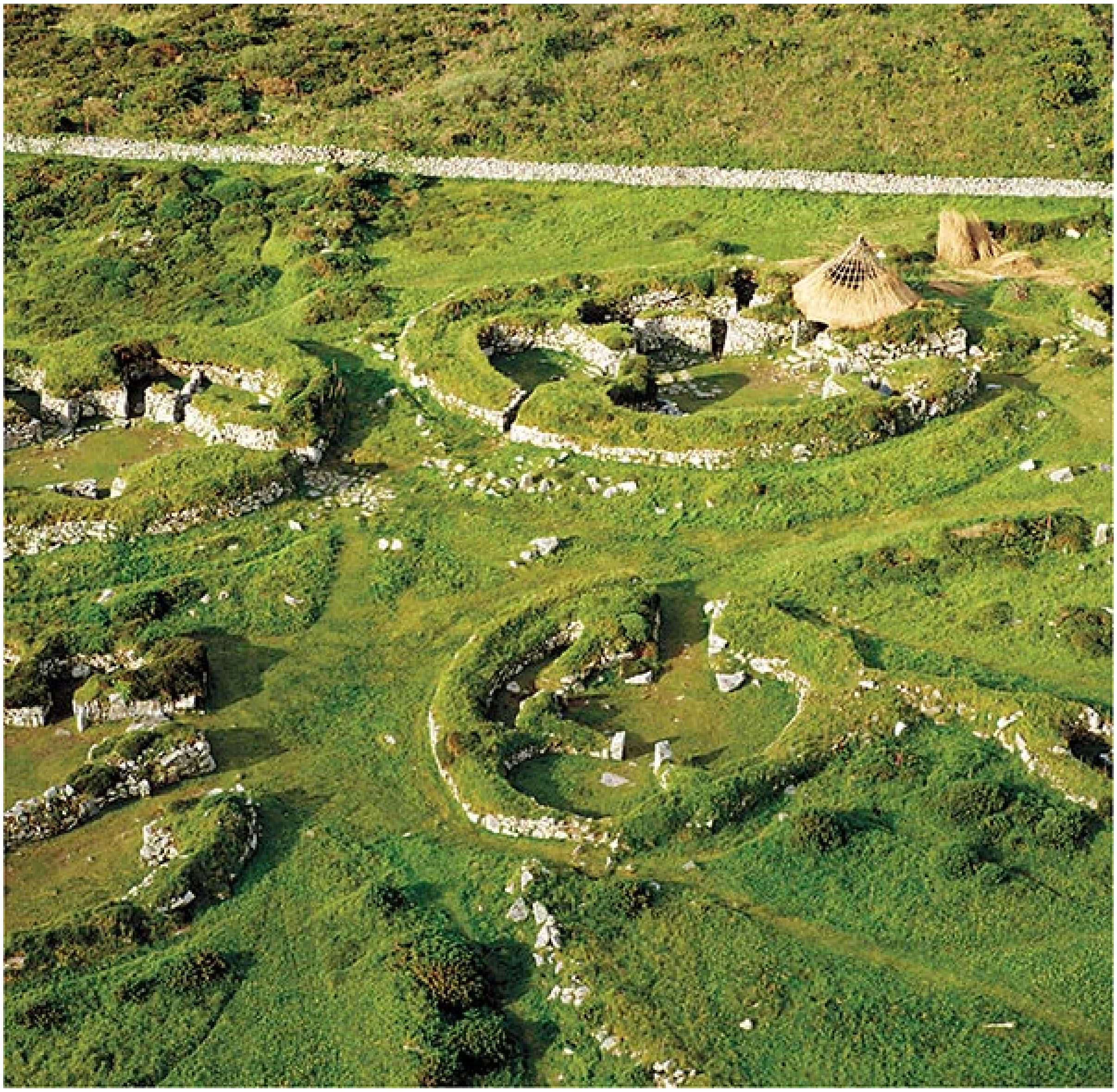
In Gaul and south-east Britain Celtic society became heavily Romanized, both by the adoption of Roman culture and by a mobility of population caused by trade and military and civil service. None the less, elements of the Celtic belief systems remained—a reality demonstrated by the maintenance of many Celtic religious sites of great antiquity, temples such as Gournay and Hayling Island and sacred springs like those of Sulis and Coventina in Britain and Sequana in Gaul. A chance remark by Ausonius, writing in the fourth century AD, that Attius Patera, a professor in Burdigala (Bordeaux), came from a Druidic family might reflect the continuation of a tradition of scholarship going back into pre-Conquest times. Certainly a sense of ethnic unity would have been fostered by the *Consilium Galliarum* and was put to good political use during the brief life of the independent Gallic empire which emerged in the turmoil of the late third century. In Armorica it is tempting to wonder if the refortification of the old Iron Age *oppida* of Alet and Le Yaudet at this time might not have been, in part at least, a symbolic gesture recalling a Celtic past.


Whitton
AD 30–55
AD 55–70
N
AD 160–230
AD 230–280
0
50
100 metres

14.1 (*Opposite top*) The Iron Age and Roman farmstead at Whitton, South Glamorgan, Wales, showing its development from the early first century AD.


Goldherring
Porthmeor
0
50 metres

14.2 (*Opposite bottom*) Native settlements of the Roman period in Cornwall. Two examples of stone-built courtyard houses constructed within enclosures (‘rounds’) which were probably of pre-Roman date.



14.3 (*Above*) The small settlement remarkably preserved at Chysauster in Cornwall comprises a group of cellular courtyard houses representing a local style of architecture which developed in the first and second centuries AD from native traditions and owed nothing to Roman ideas or techniques.

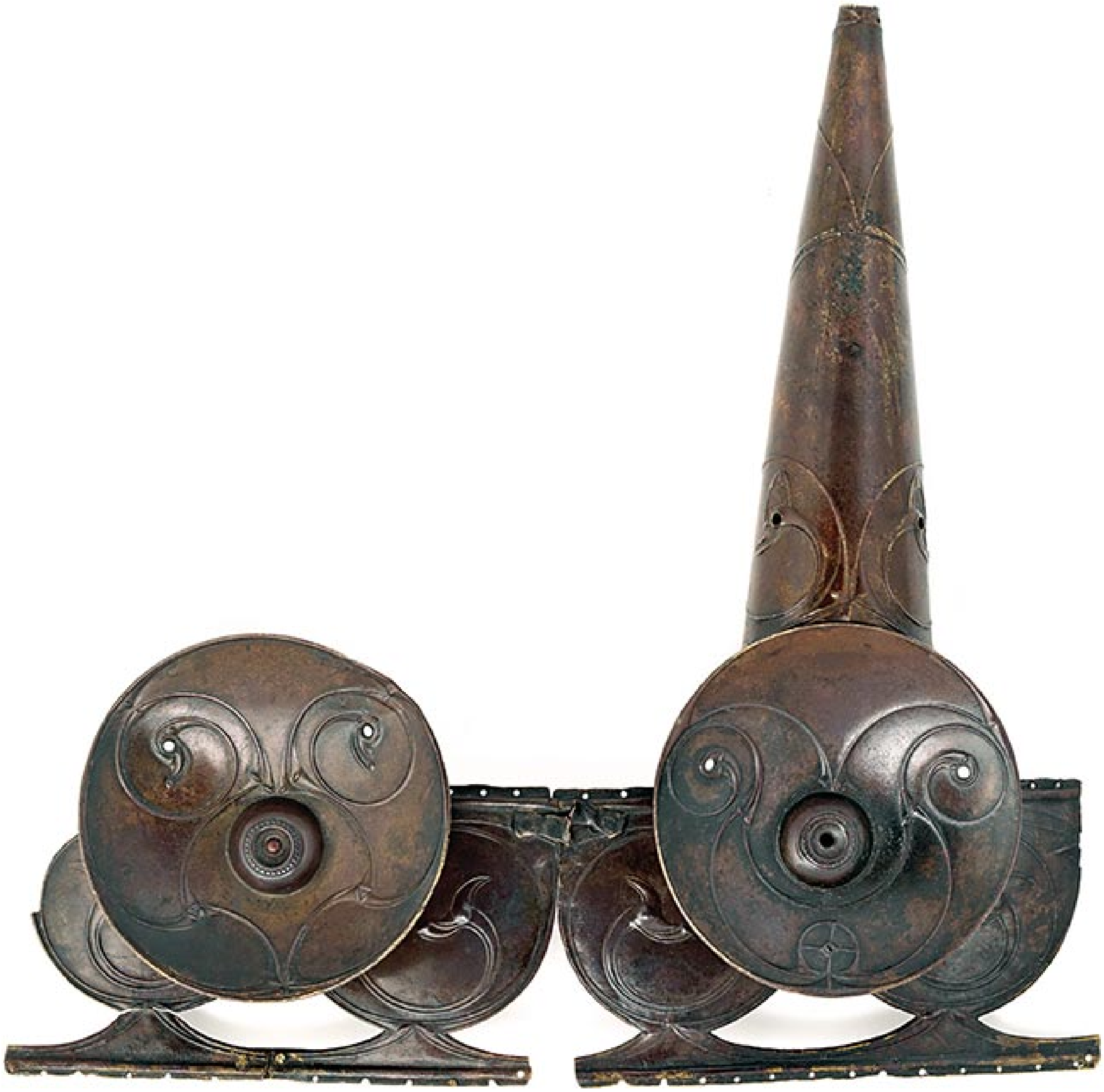
A question of some interest is the extent to which Celtic was spoken in Gaul and south-eastern Britain during the Roman period. The discovery of a number of inscribed lead curse tablets in the spring of Sulis Minerva at Bath shows that Celtic personal names remained much in evidence into the third and fourth centuries AD, and one example of an entire curse written in Celtic was recovered. A few other examples are known from Gaul, including curses thrown into the hot springs at Amélie-les-Bains and the spring of Chamalières. These few Celtic texts are interesting but they give no sure indication of the strength, or otherwise, of spoken Celtic in relation to the vulgar Latin which must surely have been widespread. Away from the areas of intense Romanization, in the south-west peninsula, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland, Celtic would have remained the dominant language throughout.

Ethnic Readjustments in the Fourth to Sixth Centuries

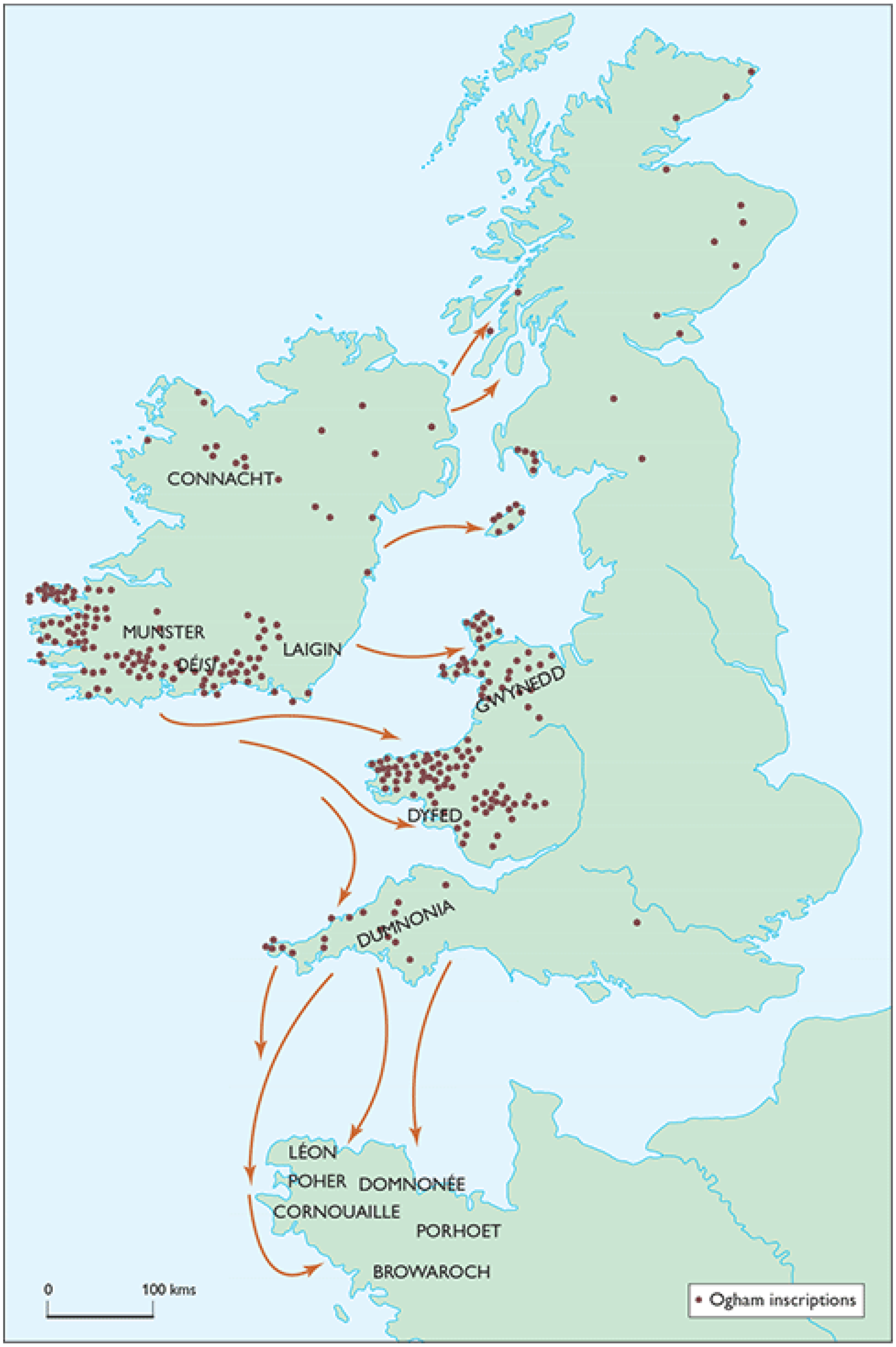
The Germanic raids into lands south of the Rhine and deep into Gaul in the late third century AD should be seen essentially as the continuation of south-thrusting pressures created by a growing and mobile north European population which first emerged into history with the Cimbri and Teutones of the late second century BC. Caesar's campaigns against Ariovistus and the subsequent creation of the Rhine frontier brought these incursions to a temporary halt but did nothing to stop the root cause. Pressures continued to build until the spectacular break-out of these northern barbarians in the mid-third century.

After a temporary respite the Germanization of the Roman west continued, first with the deliberate settlement of Germanic peoples in frontier regions to provide buffer zones and later, in the early fifth century, with large-scale population movements into Gaul and south-eastern Britain. While the actual number of immigrants involved is difficult to estimate and the size of the indigenous populations who survived may have been greater than was previously supposed, the political, and to some extent the linguistic, map was totally changed. By the end of the fifth century Clovis had brought much of northern and western Gaul under Frankish domination, leaving the more Germanic enclaves of Burgundia and Alamannia and the Ostrogothic kingdoms to control the centre and east. With the exception of Brittany, Latin was strongly entrenched, and in considerable part survived as the basis of French. In Britain German settlement had advanced rapidly across most of the Romanized south-east. Here the emergence of Anglo-Saxon as the dominant language shows that the impact of Germanization must have been considerable.

During this period of turmoil there was some movement among the surviving Celtic communities of the west. The process began with Irish raids across the Irish Sea against the coastal communities of Roman Britain. The Attocotti, from the Western Isles or Ireland, and the Picts from north of the frontier joined in, and there is a suggestion, in the contemporary historical record, that these northern and western raiders worked together with Germans from across the North Sea in what was called the Barbarian Conspiracy of AD 367. Whether the raids were concerted or fortuitous in their timing, they had a devastating effect on the Roman province. The Irish, Attocotti, and Picts were probably Celtic peoples, although some linguists claim to be able to detect a pre-Indo-European element in the Pictish language. The reasons for the raids are unrecorded, but it is likely that simple opportunism and the prevailing atmosphere of ‘folk wandering’ that characterized the period played an important part.



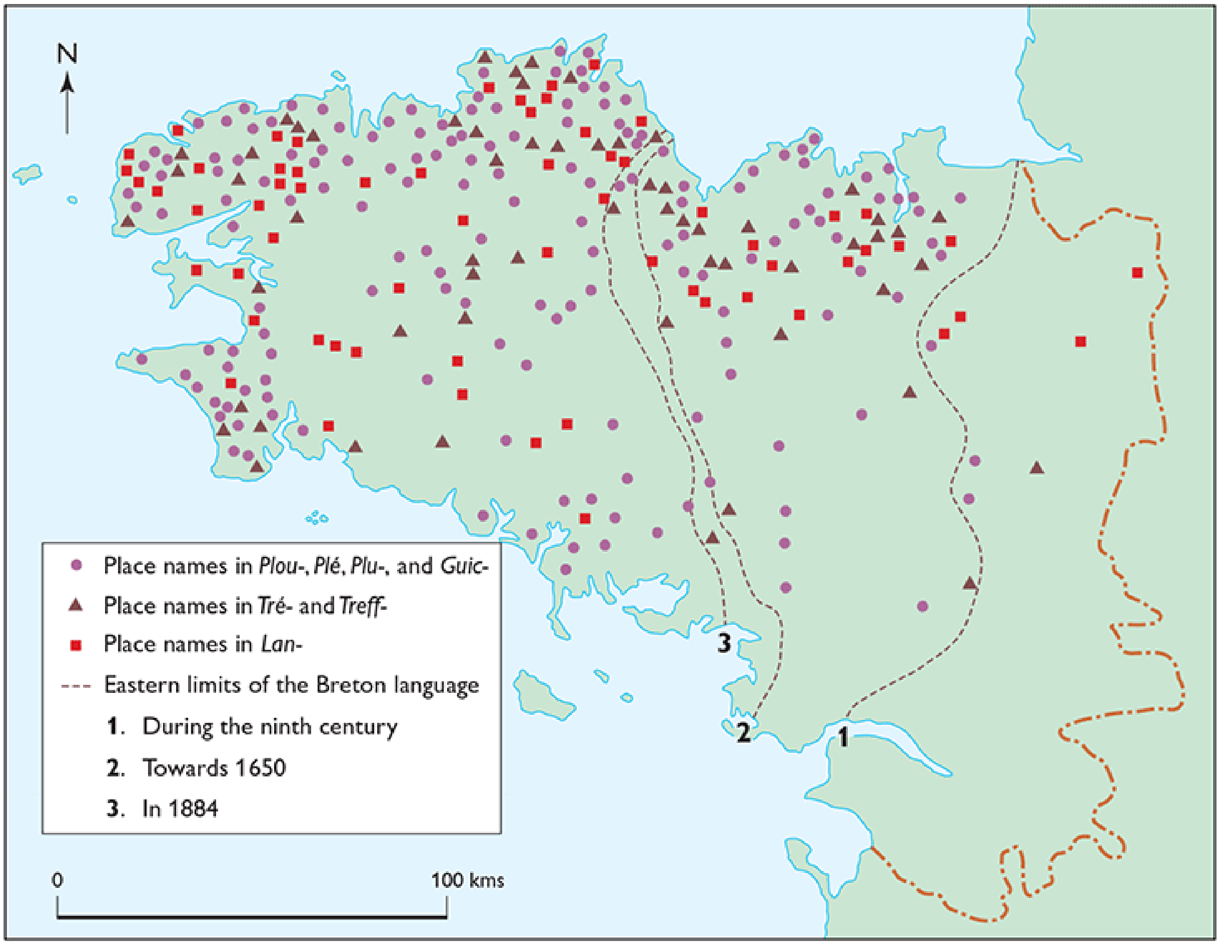
14.4 (*Opposite*) The ‘Petrie Crown’, named after the collector George Petrie, is a fragmentary bronze headpiece found somewhere in Ireland. The elegant decoration is a fine example of Irish insular La Tène art, probably dating to the first or second century AD. National Museum of Ireland, Dublin.


CONNACHT
MUNSTER
DÉISI
LAIGIN
GWYNEDD
DYFED
DUMNONIA
LÉON
POHER
DOMNONÉE
CORNOUAILLE
PORHOET
BROWAROCH
0
100 kms
• Ogham inscriptions

14.5 Ireland, Britain, and Brittany in the fourth and fifth centuries AD. The distribution of Ogham and early Christian inscribed stones in Britain reflects the penetration of Irish settlers. It was in the fifth century that people began to move from the south-west of Britain to settle in the Armorican peninsula.

The continuous pressure of the Irish on the western coasts of Britain, which began as raids in the late third century AD, led, a century later, to the creation of permanent colonial settlements. In south-west Wales, in Pembrokeshire and the Gower, the Déisi carved out enclaves; in the Lleyn Peninsula of north-west Wales, more Irish settlers established themselves; while in the western coastal region of what is now Scotland the Scotti, from northern Ireland, took control of a territory which eventually became part of the kingdom of Dál Riata extending to both sides of the Irish Sea. These Irish settlers brought with them their own distinct dialects of the Celtic language.

Another shift in population saw whole communities migrate from south Wales and south-western Britain southwards across the Channel to Armorica (which thereafter can be called by its more familiar name—Brittany). This may have begun in the fourth century with the use of British troops in the defence of Roman Gaul against barbarian attack, but by the mid-fifth century it had taken on the character of a full-scale folk movement. Although the bulk of the migrant population probably came from Cornwall and Devon, the communities of south Wales played a significant part in providing the leadership. There may also have been an Irish element participating in the restlessness.


N
● Place names in *Plou-*, *Plé*, *Plu-*, and *Guic-*
▲ Place names in *Tré-* and *Treff-*
■ Place names in *Lan-*
--- Eastern limits of the Breton language
1. During the ninth century
2. Towards 1650
3. In 1884
3
2
1
0
100 kms

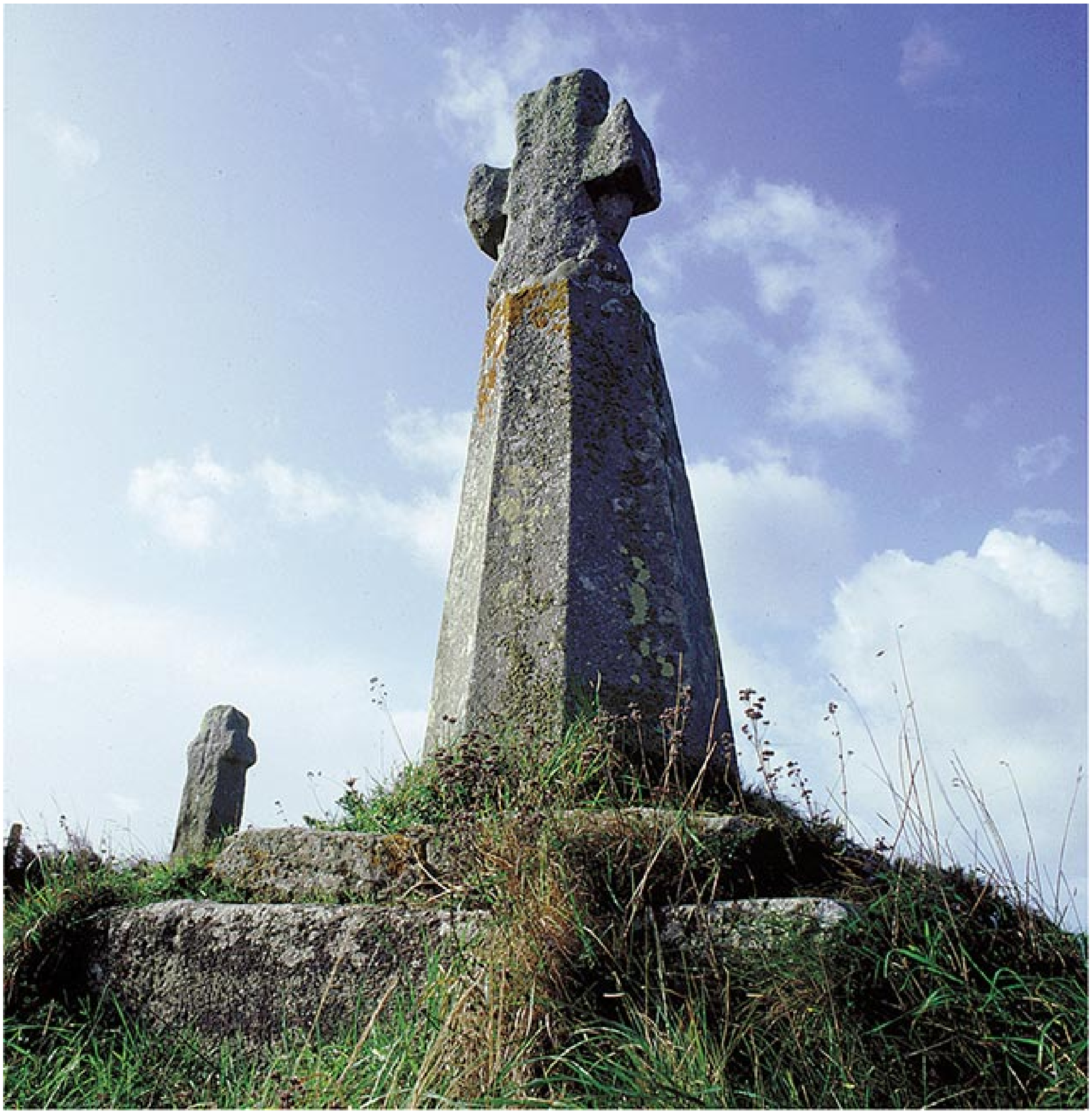
14.6 (*Opposite*) Map of early place names in Brittany, indicating the extent of the Celtic language in the fourth–sixth centuries AD.

The leaders came from the local elites. Some were evidently *peregrini*, or spiritual leaders, many of whom taking solace in the remote islands off the Breton coast or deep in the Breton forests. Others were probably younger sons seeking new lands for themselves and their followers. Their personalities and adventures contributed to the rich store of saints' lives composed four or five centuries after the event from surviving scraps of oral tradition. The reason behind the migration of the western Britons was presented by Gildas in simplistic terms. For him the prime cause was pressure from the Saxon advance from the east. While this may have contributed to the exodus, the Irish expansion into Wales and the south-west, internal population increases, and the new sense of freedom and adventure born as the constraints of Roman government crumbled are all likely to have played a part.

The complexities inherent in the study of the early British settlement in Armorica are considerable, and many issues remain the source of energetic debate. The peninsula was divided into three territories, Dumnonia (Domnonée), Cornovia (Cornouaille), and BroÃ«rec (Browaroch). The first two may have taken their names from the tribes of south-western Britain who settled the coastal regions: the third was carved out by the Breton chieftain Waroc, who advanced into the Vannetais, where Gallo-Roman culture still remained strong.

In attempting to trace the early settlement much has been made of place-name evidence. The concentration of names containing *Plou*, *Lan*, and *Tré* in northern and western Armorica has long been argued to reflect the settlements of the Britons. A very high percentage of the *Plou* names are compounded with male personal names, either saints or laymen, and of those which can be identified most have a British origin. Recent work has, however, suggested that some of the *Plou*-plus-common-name places may date to the pre-migration period. The second set of significant names are those ending in the suffix *-ac*. These concentrate in the south-east of Armorica, particularly in the Morbihan. They were believed to represent the survival of Gallo-Roman place names ending in *-acum*, but since it has been shown that this is a modification of the Gaulish *-acos* and that these names are only rarely compounded with Latin prefixes, it is now argued that the *-ac* names may well reflect the survival of the Gaulish language.

The whole question of the Breton language is subject to lively debate. It is widely accepted that there are four main dialects. Three, covering Cornouaille, Léon, and Trégor, are similar and are referred to as Kernev, Léon, and Trégor (KLT). The fourth, in the Vannetais, is significantly different. This pattern has interesting similarities to the place-name distributions mentioned above. Two diverging hypotheses are offered. The traditional view, championed by Joseph Loth and Kenneth Jackson, argues that Old Breton developed from the same Primitive Brythonic roots as Cornish and Welsh, which persisted in south-western Britain at the time of the migrations and that the Breton dialects developed only after the eleventh century. If so, then the Breton language was a form of Celtic reintroduced from Britain. The alternative view, that developed by François Falc’hun, argues that Breton derives substantially from indigenous pre-Roman Celtic. He suggests that the two principal dialect groups reflect a pre-Caesarian division, the Vannetais thus deriving from the language spoken by the Veneti while KLT was the dialect of the Osismes and Coriosolites. Falc’hun accepts, however, the contribution of British Celtic in strengthening the Celtic spoken in the north and west.



14.7 Many of the Iron Age stelae of Brittany continued to be revered as sacred places well into Christian times. Some were moved into the precincts of churches, while others were carved with Christian symbols. This stela from Croas-Men at Lampaul-Ploudalmézeau, Finistère, had had its top removed and replaced by a Christian cross.

These issues will remain at the centre of scholarly debate for some time to come. There is nothing, however, inherently unlikely in the suggestion that the Celtic language survived in Armorica from pre-Roman times, but the close relationship between Armorica and south-western Britain throughout the Late Iron Age and Roman period may well have been sufficient to have maintained a degree of parallel development in the languages of the two peninsulas during the millennium before the British migration.

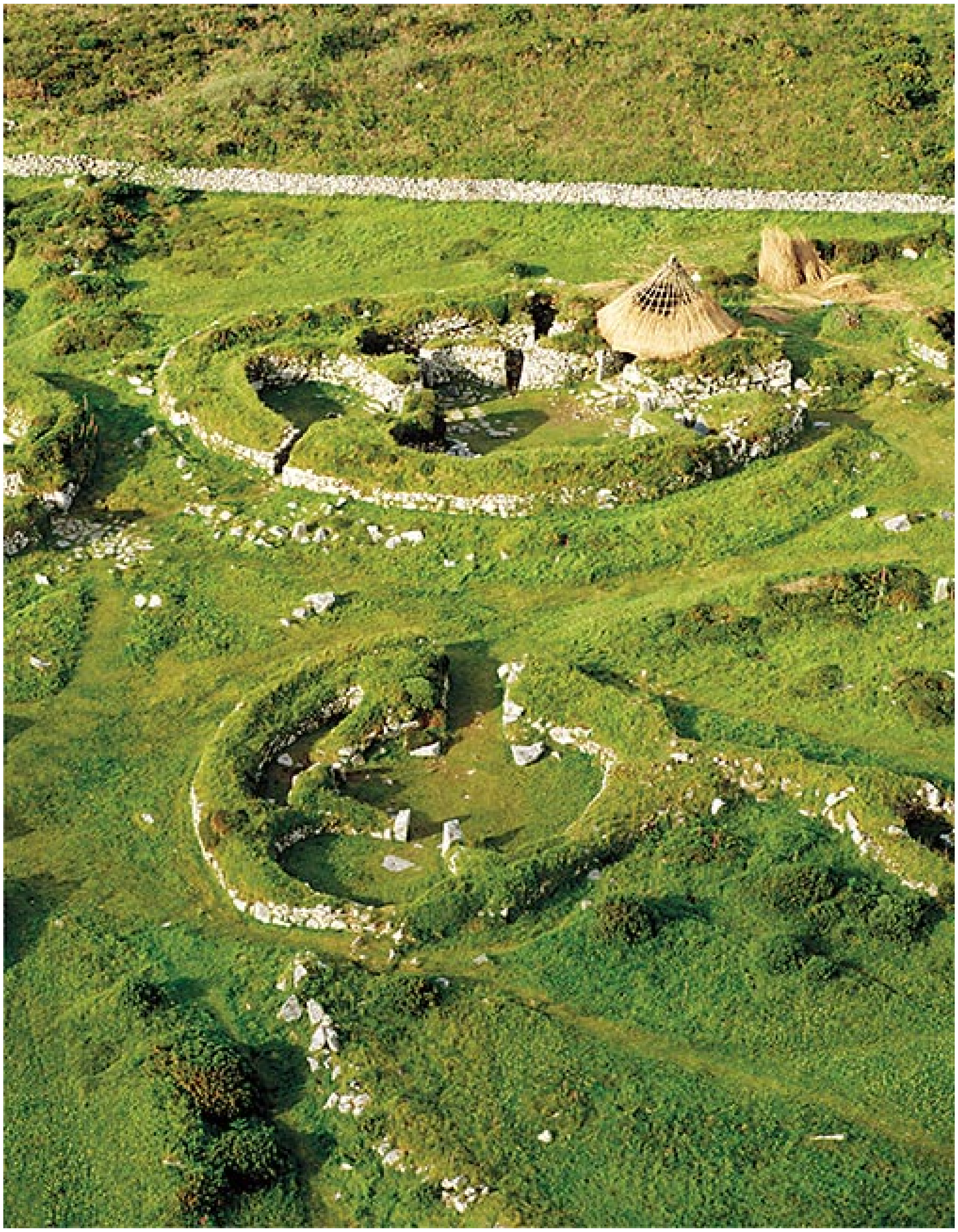
A population movement still further south into Galicia in north-western Iberia is implied by the fifth-century writer Orosius, who refers to the Galician city of Brigantia, which had, he claimed, a direct relationship with Ireland. The Irish contact is further reflected in the presence of the Celtic monastery of Santa María de Bretoña near Mondoñedo, which was included in the episcopate of Britoña. To what extent these links along the Atlantic seaways reflect a substantial movement of population or simply the influx of a small religious elite it is difficult to say.

The Celtic Communities of the Middle Ages and After

The Celtic communities of the Atlantic zone survived in different degrees of isolation throughout the early Middle Ages. The Viking attacks which began in the eighth century ravaged coastal areas of Scotland, Ireland, Cornwall, and Brittany, and in Scotland and the eastern parts of Ireland settlement followed, introducing a strong Scandinavian element into local culture. A little later the westward advance of the Norman elite established a firm hold on Wales and large tracts of Ireland. In Brittany following the Viking onslaught many of the characteristics of the Carolingian system survived, and the duchy, which eventually came into existence, became increasingly part of the greater continuum of Francia.

The complex politics of the Middle Ages brought the Celtic populations of the west into direct contact with the rising power of the mongrel elites of England and France, while the spread of Christianity in its many guises introduced new value systems with new role models, mythologies, and symbolisms. Inevitably the Celtic cultures of the west changed, but the remoteness of their lands at the far extremities of the civilized world allowed much of the indigenous pattern of life to continue behind the thin Anglo-Norman façade. The vibrant epics and folk tales of Ireland and, to a lesser extent, Wales survived, albeit modified by Christianized redactors, while in Scotland, Cornwall, and Brittany, though little of literary merit has come down to us, the scraps of folk tales and legends that do survive are a reminder of what there once was. In the Law Tracts of Ireland and Wales we glimpse Celtic society in all its intricacies.

The growing imperialism of France and England during the eighteenth century, with its deliberate attempts to impose metropolitan values and rule on all the distant peripheries, tried to erase the already weakened Celtic cultures, but in doing so created a new spirit of resistance. The Celtic past, in all its manifestations, took on a new importance as a symbol of unity. It was in this mood of ethnic struggle that the Celtic revival, which we briefly reviewed in Chapter 1, had its genesis. To what extent the Celticism of the Atlantic façade is a survival or a revival is a matter for anthropologists to debate. What is not in doubt, as anyone familiar with Galicia, Brittany, Ireland, Scotland, or Wales will well know, is the very strong emotional appeal which the idea of sharing a common Celtic heritage has. Perhaps the only real definition of a Celt, now as in the past, is that a Celt is a person who believes him- or herself to be Celtic.



15

Retrospect

SINCE the early eighteenth century the quest for the Celts has become a consuming passion for an increasing number of historians, linguists, folklorists, art historians, and archaeologists. Inevitably, this intensity of effort and enthusiasm has spilled over into the public's understanding of the past, in part informing it but at the same time introducing imperfectly understood concepts which are sometimes used to underpin vague notions of ethnicity and, occasionally, to excuse extremes of political behaviour. This woolly, fey, and sometimes dangerous Celtic fringe has brought the word 'Celt' into disrepute in some academic circles, and understandably so, but it would be as well to remind ourselves that the concept of Celticness exists and has existed only through the interpretations which observers have chosen to put upon it, whether they be Polybius or Yeats—for both of whom the Celts were very real.

In this book we have chosen to take a broad view. For us the Celts comprise a large number of ethnic groups who occupied much of western and central Europe in the first millennium BC and spoke a series of related dialects which linguists define as Celtic. Some of these groups moved into east Europe to settle. They were rapidly assimilated, as eventually were those called Galatians who settled in Asia Minor. Over much of the rest of the Continent 'Celticness' eventually disappeared in the turmoil and reformation of the first half of the first millennium AD and only in the extreme western fringes did the language, and with it the memory of the Celtic heritage, survive.

Over such a vast tract of land and period of time there was, inevitably, much variation. Tribes trekked far and wide and polities came and went. To what extent the different entities regarded themselves as having a common heritage we can only speculate. The huge hordes that moved eastwards in the third century must have felt themselves to be part of a single people, and likewise the disparate tribes called upon by Vercingetorix to send troops to Alesia to oppose the Romans. That contacts were maintained over considerable distances is suggested by historical anecdotes referring to political links between the Galatians in Asia Minor and the inhabitants of the area around Massalia, but whether any of this meant that individual lineages felt that they belonged to a shared international Celticness will always remain in doubt.

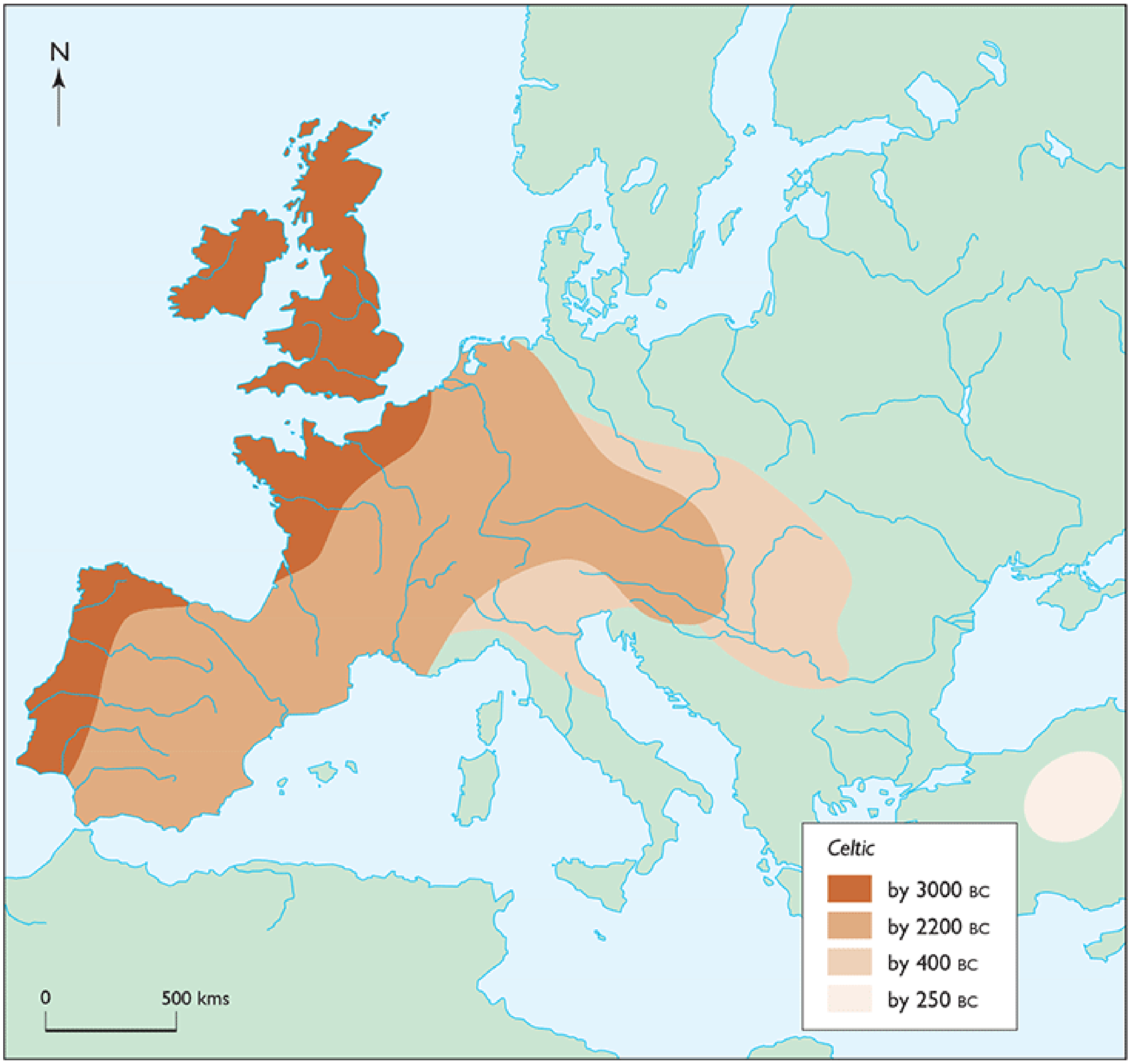
The two most commonly used methods of defining Celts—language and La Tène material culture and art—both present problems in that they represent very different cultural attributes. Certainly by the eighth century BC Celtic languages appear to have been spoken over wide, if discontinuous, areas of western Europe, while the material manifestations of La Tène culture reflect the later emergence, expansion, and subsequent evolution of one cultural complex for a brief period of three or four centuries. While these two aspects of Celticness overlap in time and space, they are by no means coterminous.

The origins of the Celtic language are obscure and will likely remain so but there is now sufficient evidence to suggest that Celtic was being spoken in the Atlantic zone by the Late Bronze Age. Since it is an Indo-European language the question of origins is dependent upon when Indo-European was first introduced into Europe. The hypothesis favoured here is that this happened with the introduction of farming in the period 7000–5000 BC and that it was along the Atlantic-facing coast of Europe that Celtic emerged as a lingua franca during the long phase of intensive connectivity, evident in the archaeological record, spanning the period 5000–3000 BC. In the third millennium BC during a period of intensified mobility early Celtic spread eastwards with the movements associated with the Bell Beaker phenomenon. It developed further, perhaps somewhere in the Rhine region, where western Bell Beaker communities came into contact with people directly influenced by nomadic groups who were entering Europe from the Pontic–Caspian steppe. In this model the

Celtic language would have been spoken over much of western and west central Europe by the end of the third millennium.

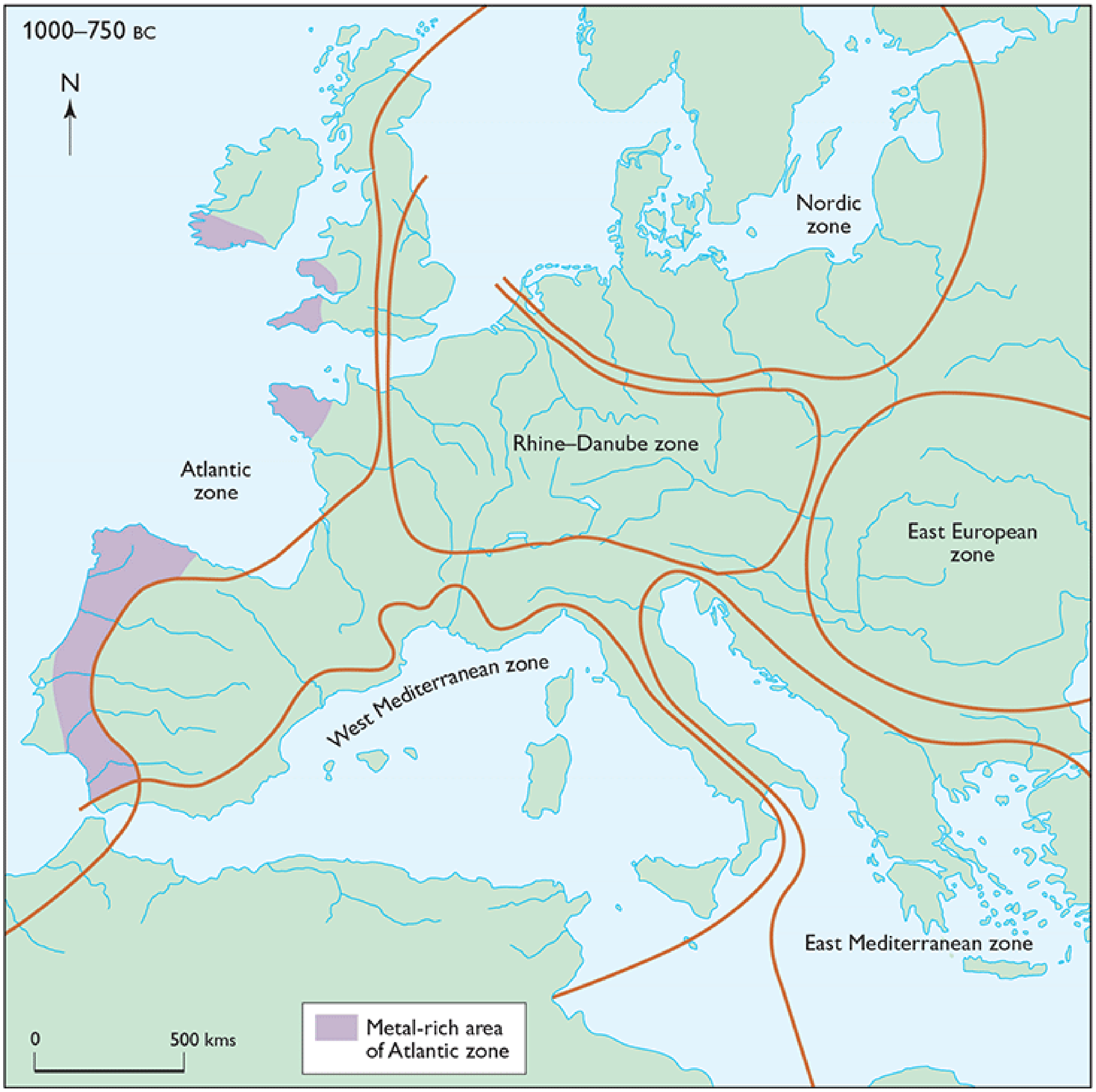
By the end of the second millennium, after a thousand years of development, three broad cultural zones had crystallized out in Europe: an Atlantic zone, a Rhine–Danube zone, and a west Mediterranean zone, each with its own internal system and each interacting with the others.

The Atlantic zone, stretching from AndalucÃa to the west coast of Scotland, was bound by the sea, which provided comparative ease of communication between the component territories and over vast distances. Besides this its greatest attribute was its metal-rich geology. Galicia, Armorica, south-west Britain, south Wales, and southern Ireland between them offered—and no doubt provided—huge quantities of copper, tin, silver, and gold to the polities of central and Mediterranean Europe.



15.1 The hypothesis that the Celtic language originated in the Atlantic zone argues that the language developed as a lingua franca and spread eastwards into middle Europe during the Beaker period by 2000 BC. The subsequent spread eastwards into the Carpathian basin and along the Middle Danube took place during the migrations of the fifth century BC.

The Rhine–Danube zone was particularly favoured as the principal route nexus of peninsular Europe, where the watersheds of the Rhine, Danube, and Seine met and that of the Seine and Rhône. The zone sat astride the east–west routes from the Atlantic zone to eastern Europe and beyond as well as the north–south routes between the Mediterranean and the northern Europe–Baltic (or Nordic) zone.


1000–750 BC
N
Nordic zone
Rhine–Danube zone
Atlantic zone
East European zone
West Mediterranean zone
East Mediterranean zone
0
500 kms
Metal-rich area of Atlantic zone

15.2 Europe in the Late Bronze Age, showing the major socio-cultural zones into which the Late Bronze Age communities can be arranged.

The west Mediterranean constituted the third system. The sea provided the means of communication along the entire littoral from Italy to AndalucÃa and between the many islands from Sicily to the Balearics.

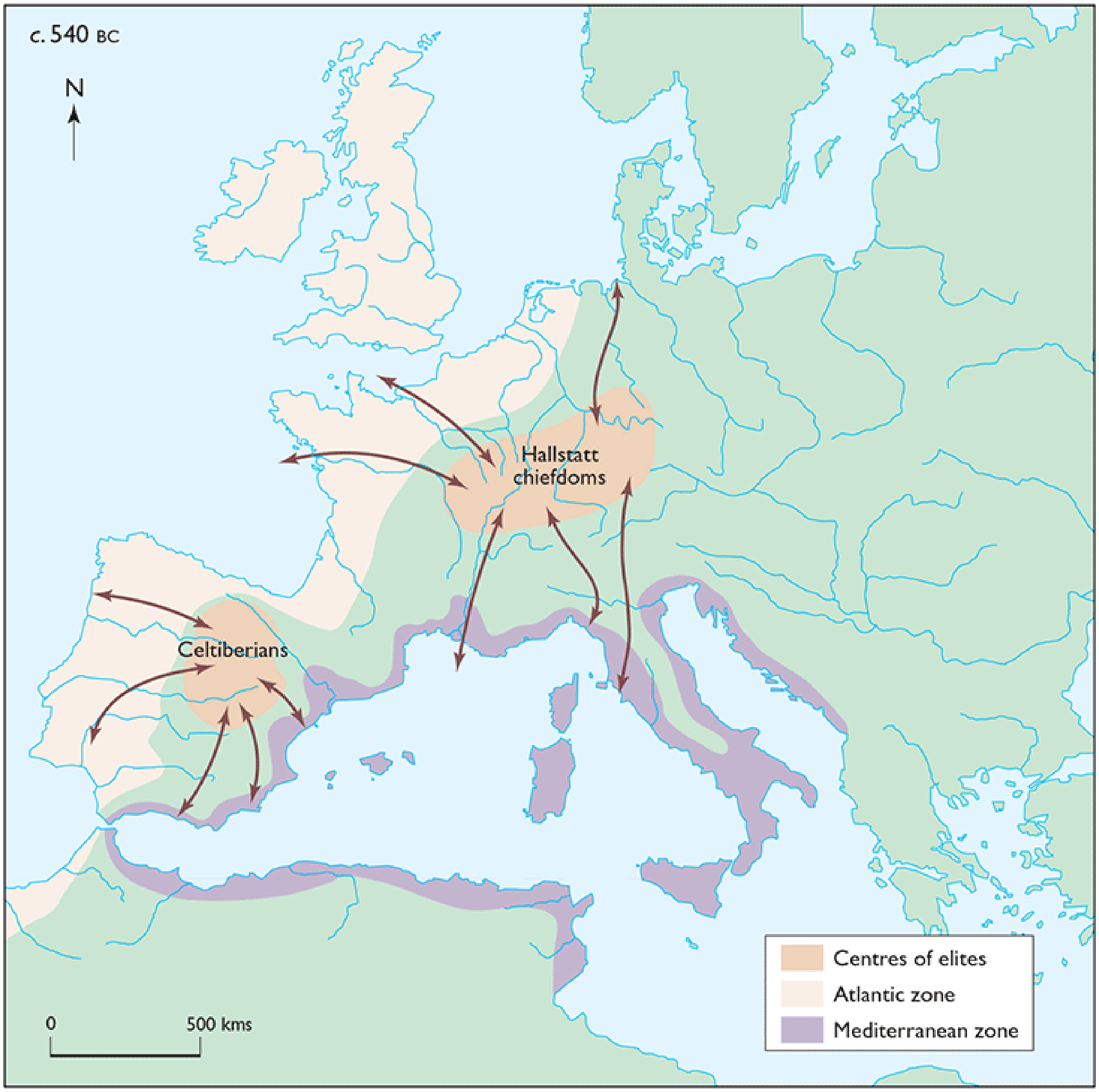
The different pace of social and economic interaction between these three zones provided the complex dynamics which led to the emergence and expansion of the disparate Celtic-speaking societies. This composite region of western Europe embracing the three zones also developed contacts with other major socio-cultural complexes, the Nordic, the east European, and the east Mediterranean zone. In the second half of the first millennium BC the Celtic-speaking peoples from the west interacted with all of them.

In the tenth century BC Phoenician entrepreneurs from the eastern end of the Mediterranean established long-distance trading links with Celtic-speaking communities in south-western Iberia. Initially merchants set themselves up in the Tartessian port now called Huelva but soon created their own permanent port of Gadir (now Cadiz) on two offshore islands. From here trading enclaves spread along the Atlantic coasts of Iberia and Morocco. The overall effect of this was to draw the Celtic-speaking communities of western Iberia into the Mediterranean sphere, which led to their being cut off from the rest of the Atlantic system. Thereafter the Iberian Celts, separated from the rest of western Europe by the Pyrenees and with the Atlantic connectivity at an end, developed in isolation, their language diverging from that of the rest of western Europe.

During the period that followed from 850 to 450 BC the states now controlling the western Mediterranean—Phoenicians, Carthaginians, Etruscans, and Greeks—made an increasing impact on the European barbarian hinterland. In Iberia the Phoenicians extended their sphere of influence along the coastal region of south-eastern Iberia while the Etruscans established lively trading contacts with southern France in the Rhône delta region. Later, in about 600 BC, the Phokaian Greeks began to set up colonies around the Golfe du Lion, ousting the Etruscans in the process. Massalia (Marseilles) became the prime trading centre and others soon followed, Greek commercial interests spreading along the east coast of Iberia. The new dynamic imperatives which motivated these traders along the whole of the European littoral of the west Mediterranean had a major impact on the Celtic communities. A simple way to model the situation is to see the Mediterranean zone as a consuming core avid for manpower and raw materials, while the European hinterland, especially the Atlantic zone, were the providers. In such a system those communities who could control the exchanges, by virtue of their locations on the major routes, would benefit their leaders, who became rich and powerful. This is what happened in the seventh and sixth centuries. In Iberia the tribes of the Meseta, who became known to classical writers as Celtiberians, developed as powerful chiefdoms controlling the throughput of metals from the

Atlantic region to the Mediterranean. In west central Europe the Hallstatt communities of the Rhine–Danube zone, who commanded the major river routes, developed a distinctive prestige goods economy based on the ability of the chiefs to control the distribution of luxury goods. Both zones, the Celtiberians and the West Hallstatt chiefdoms, became centres of social and economic innovation.

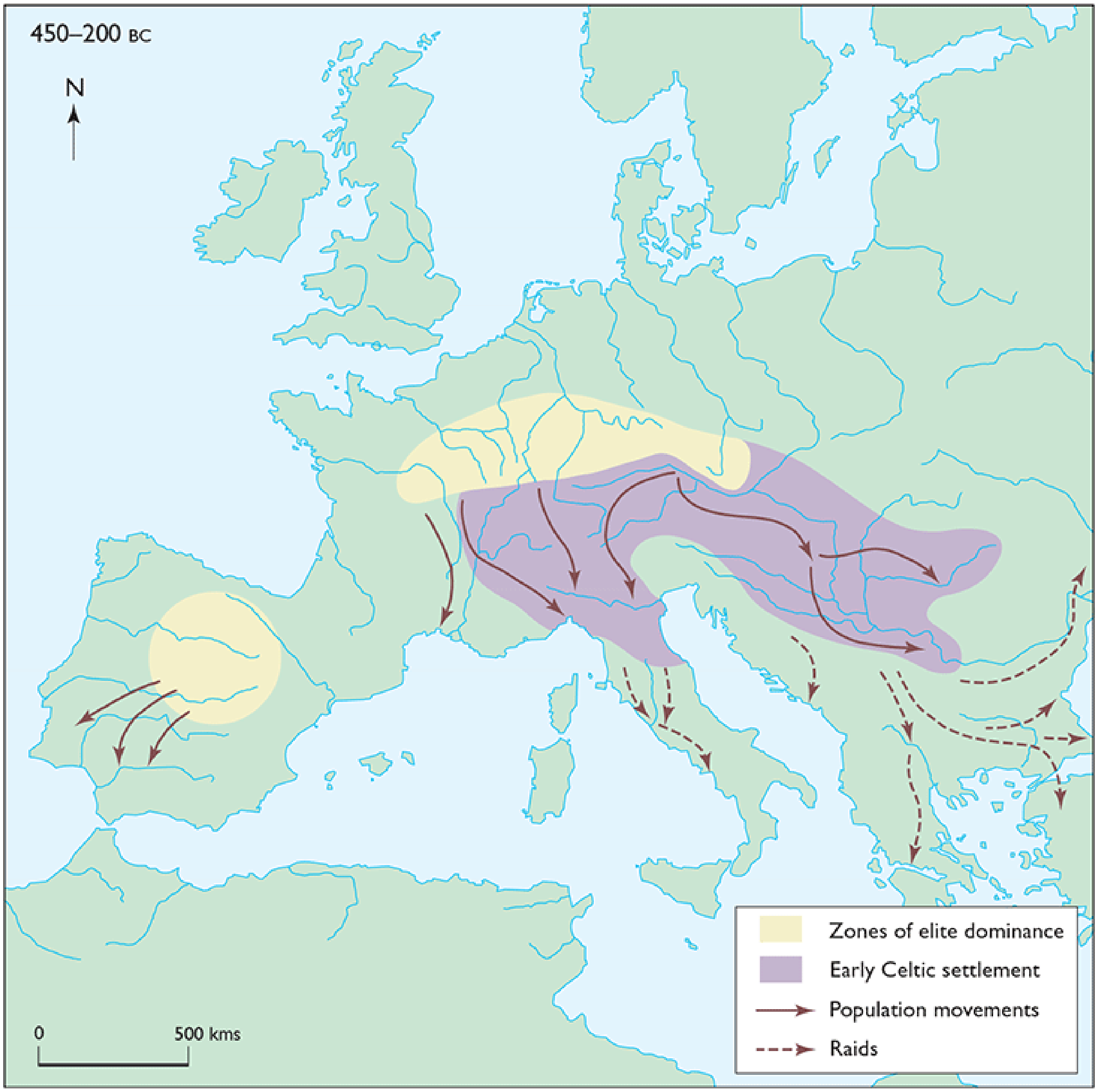
As we have already cautioned, this is, of course, a simplification of a highly complex situation. While the dominant force was certainly the demand by the Mediterranean states for consumables, one should not overlook the social dynamics of the two core zones, the Atlantic and the Rhine–Danube, where power was directly related to the ability to provide hospitality and patronage. In societies of this kind the inflow of exotics from the Mediterranean would have been positively encouraged. The West Hallstatt chiefdoms in particular relied heavily on a constant supply of consumer goods from the south and metals from their periphery to maintain their power structure and to underpin their escalating conspicuous consumption. It was an unstable system which lasted for only a few generations. Celtiberian society does not seem to have created the same dependence on supplies of exotic goods. It was less susceptible to supply and demand and therefore was able to survive.


c. 540 BC
N
Hallstatt chiefdoms
Celtiberians
Centres of elites
Atlantic zone
Mediterranean zone
0
500 kms

15.3 Europe in the Hallstatt period. By this stage the Celtic languages were spoken over much of western Europe and two major zones of innovation were developing in Iberia and west central Europe. Both were in active contact with the west Mediterranean zone and with the metal-rich Atlantic zone.

The next major phase began in *c*.450 and lasted until about 200 BC. In west central Europe this saw the emergence of a new elite, around the northern and western fringes of the West Hallstatt chiefdom zone, an elite which can be characterized by the distinctive La Tène material culture. After a brief period of development the traditional social system which had been slowly evolving for more than 500 years collapsed. The suddenness of this and the massive social upheaval which ensued make the events of the late fifth century BC a classic example of systems-collapse. The causes are difficult to untangle but may in part have been due to the social instability inherent in the elite system, exacerbated by population increase and reorientations within the Mediterranean economy.

What followed was an outpouring of populations into both the Mediterranean and the east European zone. The expansion was temporarily halted in the Balkans by the power of Macedonia, but, following the death of Alexander in 323 BC and the political instability which ensued, Celtic-speaking peoples thrust eastwards, establishing themselves in the Middle Danube (the Scordisci), on the eastern shores of the Black Sea (the kingdom of Tylis), in Asia Minor (the Galatians), and probably in Moldova. Elsewhere within this broad zone Celts settled among existing populations or served as mercenaries wherever they could find employment. The numbers involved are difficult to estimate but must have run into hundreds of thousands.


450–200 BC
N
0
500 kms
Zones of elite dominance
Early Celtic settlement
Population movements
Raids

15.4 Europe in the Early and Middle La Tène period. It was during this time that populations from the elite zones began to expand into peripheral areas away from the territories in which Celtic languages had been spoken for some centuries.

There is nothing in the archaeological record to suggest any significant migration to the west. Indeed it could be argued that communities of the western periphery up to the Atlantic coast and beyond were saved from predatory attack because they had long been bound in networks of reciprocal exchange with the elite-dominated zone of west central Europe.

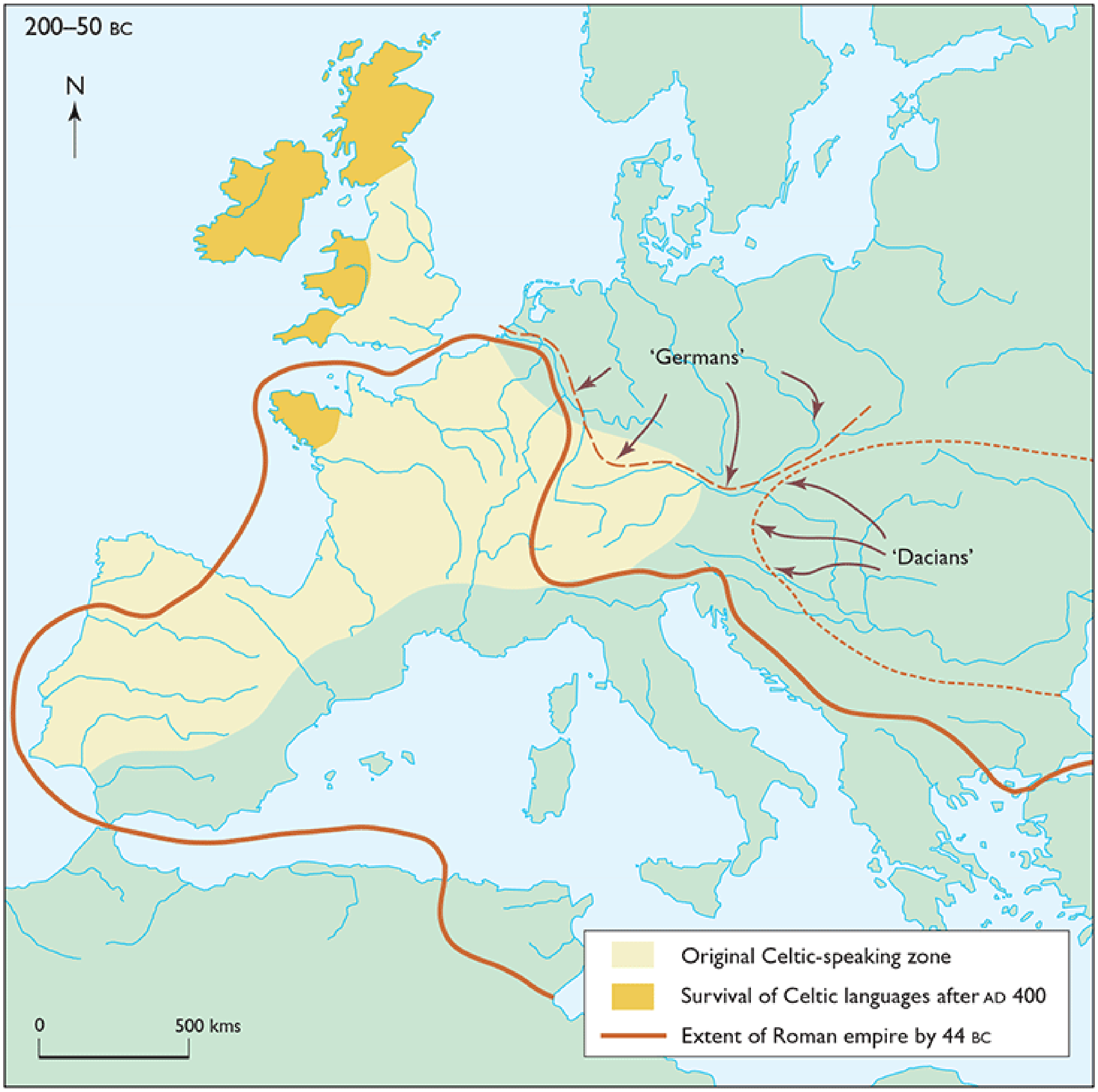
What is abundantly clear is that the main thrust of the migratory moves was to the south and east.

The situation in Iberia is less clear but the Celtiberian chiefdoms of the core zone continued to flourish. That there was some expansion to the south and west is borne out both by the classical sources and by the distribution of tribal names.

The migrations were largely at an end by 200 BC. This was the moment when Rome, freed from the threat of Carthage by her hard-won victories during the Second Punic War, entered into a more expansive mode. Military involvement in Iberia led to the gradual subjugation of the Celtiberians, while increasing intensity in trade with the Transalpine Celts introduced a new range of opportunities and a catalyst for change. Here the energies which previously had been dissipated in aggression were turned to more productive pursuits, and the social display of luxuries acquired through trade in cycles of conspicuous consumption replaced the desire for prowess to be gained from the successful outcome of a raid. In this way the Celtic tribes began to be transformed into urban-based states where gifts, dues, and other exchanges were articulated through the exchange of coins.

The transformation of the Celtic world was gradual and uneven. In the century and a half from 200 to 50 BC, the communities closest to the Roman frontiers had changed dramatically, but at this point local developments were overtaken by Germanic pressures from the Nordic zone, Dacian and Sarmatian pressures from the east European zone, and a rapid escalation in the Roman desire for empire. In a brief sixty years the Celtic communities of Continental Europe were completely overrun and within the century much of the south of Britain had been absorbed as well.

Only the Insular Celtic-speaking communities of the far west remained free. Those of Cornwall, Wales, and northern Britain were loosely controlled within the frontiers of the empire: beyond, in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland and in Ireland, they lay outside the reach of Rome and when, in the late third century and after, Roman control weakened, there was a limited resurgence, with small populations moving east and south along the Atlantic seaways. The survival of the language, laws, and traditions of these Atlantic fringe Celtic communities and the revival of their culture that began in the eighteenth century are part of a different but no less fascinating story.


200–50 BC
N
'Germans'
'Dacians'
Original Celtic-speaking zone
Survival of Celtic languages after AD 400
Extent of Roman empire by 44 BC
0
500 kms

15.5 Europe in the Late La Tène period. This period saw the Celtic communities under increasing pressures particularly from the Romans but also to a lesser extent from Dacians and Germans. By AD 400 Celtic languages survived only in the Atlantic zone.

The development of the Celtic language as a lingua franca along the Atlantic seaways, possibly as early as the fourth millennium BC, and its spread eastwards into west central Europe in the third millennium mark the beginning of the history of the Celts. But it was in the Late Bronze Age, *c.*1300–800 BC, as Europe underwent a period of consolidation and transformation, that the social structures and belief systems we recognize to be Celtic began to crystallize out in the different regions of western

Europe. Then followed the emergence of early chiefdoms, 800–450, as the increasing rhythms of the Mediterranean economy began to impinge. The systems-collapse and diaspora of 450–200 created a warrior society which was to provide the classical world with its stereotype of the ‘northern barbarian’ and the archaeologist with a material culture which can be used to identify the Celts as described by the classical authors. Thereafter, in the final phase, the Mediterranean-based culture of the Romans spread its influence northwards, first through traders, then by means of the army, and finally—and more devastatingly—through provincial administrators, until only a few insular communities, long isolated from the developments in Continental Europe, were left clinging to a precarious freedom along the Atlantic fringes.

Sufficient has been said in this brief retrospect to remind us that Celtic-speaking peoples have had a long and complex history: their diversity in social and cultural terms is beyond dispute. Yet the stereotype of them which, for a variety of reasons, their literate contemporaries created still echoes across the ages. These visions have provided, and no doubt will continue to provide, metaphors for later generations. The ‘Celt’ is a powerful and emotive image which pervades our culture, and it is entirely proper that we should spend time attempting to understand it in all its many guises.

A GUIDE TO FURTHER READING

THE quantity of literature on the subject of the Celts is enormous and to guide those wishing to go deeper into the subject is not easy. In the sections to follow we offer, first, a series of books written for the general reader, which, in many cases, are attractively illustrated. Then follows a list of more specialist monographs published since about 1970 which together, in some 300 individual papers, provide a fair coverage of the detailed research being undertaken. These volumes should be approached only by those of resilient disposition.

Thereafter some guidance is given as to the most significant general reading on a chapter-by-chapter basis. Wherever possible English works have been chosen, but, where nothing suitable exists, French, German, Spanish, and Portuguese sources have been suggested. Most of the works cited have extensive bibliographies which will help the enthusiast to begin detailed research on virtually any Celtic topic. It is a pursuit which can fill many lifetimes.

Many quotations from classical texts are used throughout this book. The translations come from a variety of sources. For some I have used more than one translation to create a preferred text and sometimes I have used modifications of my own. The Loeb translations have featured large; so too have those published in the Penguin Classics series. A very useful and reliable compilation is offered in J. T. Koch (ed.) in collaboration with J. Carey, *The Celtic Heroic Age: Literary Sources for Ancient Celtic Europe and Early Ireland and Wales* (4th edn., Aberystwyth, 2003). Another extremely valuable source, with translations, is J. J. Tierney, ‘The Celtic Ethnography of Posidonius’, *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, 60C (1960), 189–275. My favourite translation of Caesar’s *Commentarii de bello Gallico* is A. and P. Wiseman, *Julius Caesar: The Battle for Gaul* (London, 1980).

General Books

There are so many general books on the Celts that to make a short selection is not easy but four books read together will provide a balanced introduction to the subject and its many ongoing debates. The classic text, T. G. E. Powell, *The Celts* (London, 1958; new edn., 1980), gives an elegant summary of the main essentials. S. James, *The Atlantic Celts: Ancient People or Modern Invention?* (London, 1999) and J. Collis, *The Celts: Origins, Myths and Inventions* (Stroud, 2003) offer criticism of old preconceptions, while B. Cunliffe, *The Celts: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford, 2003) attempts to give a brief overview and to introduce the ongoing debate on the origin of the Celtic language. In addition to these four texts the reader might like to refer to two other recent works: A. Roberts, *The Celts: Search for a Civilization* (London, 2015) and J. Manco, *Blood of the Celts: The New Ancestral Story* (London, 2015). The first is an enthusiastic voyage of discovery, the second an early attempt to engage with ancient DNA evidence which is just beginning to come on stream.

So much for an introduction. For more detail, S. James, *Exploring the World of the Celts* (London, 1993) is strongly to be recommended. There are also two older works attractive both for their texts, written by world experts, and for the brilliance of their photographs: P.-M. Duval, *Les Celtes* (Paris, 1977) and V. Kruta (with photographs by W. Forman), *The Celts of the West* (London, 1985). Those seeking even more detail but still in readable form should try the collection of papers in M. J. Green (ed.), *The Celtic World* (London, 1995) and then move on to a massive tome, *The Celts*, edited by S. Moscati and others, published in 1991 in Milan to accompany a comprehensive exhibition entitled ‘The Celts: The Origins of Europe’ which was held in Venice. It contains 138 short illustrated papers on Celtic sites and other themes. For readers who find maps to be a useful aid there are three atlases available: J. Haywood, *The Historical Atlas of the Celtic World* (London, 2001); B. Raftery, *Atlas of the Celts* (London, 2001); and J. Koch et al. (eds.), *An Atlas for Celtic Studies: Archaeology and Names in Ancient Europe and Early Medieval Ireland, Britain, and Brittany* (Oxford, 2007), the last being the most detailed and the most archaeological. This fine work should be used with the same author’s edited compendium, *Celtic Culture: A Historical Encyclopedia* (Santa

Barbara, Calif., and Oxford, 2006). Together they provide a detailed and authoritative background to Celtic studies for the serious scholar.

Many of the works already mentioned take the story of the Celts on after the Roman period to recent times. There are a few which make this later period their focus. The three classics are: N. Chadwick, *The Celts* (Harmondsworth, 1970); M. Dillon and N. Chadwick, *The Celtic Realms* (London, 1967); and A. and B. Rees, *Celtic Heritage: Ancient Tradition in Ireland and Wales* (London, 1961).To these we must add two invaluable works: J. Koch (ed.) in collaboration with J. Carey, *The Celtic Heroic Age: Literary Sources for Ancient Celtic Europe and Early Ireland and Wales* (4th edn., Aberystwyth, 2003), which, as the subtitle suggests, provides a large number of the original texts in English translation, and J. MacKillop, *Myths and Legends of the Celts* (London, 2005), which gives an easy access to the fascinating twilight world of the Atlantic fringes. One final recommendation. An exhibition held at the British Museum and the National Museum of Scotland in 2015–16 presenting a selection of the Celtic items from 500 BC to AD 1920 was supported by a brilliant, copiously illustrated catalogue: J. Farley and F. Hunter (eds.), *Celts: Art and Identity* (London, 2015). There is no better way to appreciate the Celts in all their complex reflections.

More Specialist Works

An increasing number of edited compilations of specialist papers are being published, often emanating from conferences or colloquia and designed mainly for the specialist reader. These contain work of varying degrees of usefulness, usually concerned with research in progress. Among those which offer a selection of interesting papers are: T. C. Champion and J. V. S. Megaw (eds.), *Settlement and Society: Aspects of West European Prehistory in the First Millennium B.C.* (Leicester, 1985); K. Kristiansen and J. Jensen (eds.), *Europe in the First Millennium B.C.* (Sheffield, 1994); J. D. Hill and C. G. Cumberpatch (eds.), *Different Iron Ages: Studies on the Iron Age in Temperate Europe* (Oxford, 1995); B. Arnold and D. B. Gibson (eds.), *Celtic Chiefdom, Celtic State: The Evolution of Complex Social Systems in Prehistoric Europe* (Cambridge, 1995); J. Collis (ed.), *Society and Settlement in Iron Age Europe* (Sheffield, 2001); and S. Krausz et al. (eds.), *L'Âge du fer en Europe: mélanges offerts à Olivier Buchsenschutz* (Bordeaux, 2013).

In addition to these volumes, which could reasonably claim to have a European-wide scope, there are a number of more regionally based compilations which may be cited as useful reference works for the specialist. These include: Catalogue: D. Straub (ed.), Die Hallstattkultur: Frühform europäischer Einheit (Linz, 1980); Symposium: *Die Hallstattkultur: Symposium: Papers* (Steyr, 1980); E. Jerem (ed.), *Hallstatt Kolloquium Veszprém 1984* (Budapest, 1986); L. Pauli (ed.), *Die Kelten in Mitteleuropa: Kultur, Kunst, Wirtschaft. Salzburger Landesausstellung 1. Mai–30. Sept. 1980 im Keltenmuseum, Hallein, Österreich* (Salzburg, 1980); K. Bittel, W. Kimmig, and S. Schiek (eds.), Die Kelten in Baden-Wärttemberg (Stuttgart, 1981); Catalogue: D. Božić, KELTOI*: Kelti in njihovi sodobniki na ozemlju Jugoslavije* (Ljubljana, 1983); J.-W. Neugebauer, *Die Kelten im Osten Österreichs* (St Pölten, 1992); F. Jenö, *The Celts in Central Europe: Papers of the II. Pannonia Conference* (Székesfehérvár, 1975); P.-M. Duval and V. Kruta (eds.), *Les Mouvements celtiques du Ve au Ier siècle avant notre ère* (Paris, 1979); P. Drda and A. Rybová, *Les Celtes de Bohême* (Paris, 1995); M. Szabó, *Les Celtes de l'est: le second âge du fer dans la cuvette des Karpates* (Paris, 1992); P.-M. Duval and V. Kruta, *L'Habitat et la nécropole à l'âge du fer en Europe occidentale et centrale* (Paris, 1975); *L'Âge du fer en France septentrionale*, Mémoires de la Société archéologique champenoise, 2 (Reims, 1981); J. Collis, A. Duval, and R. Périchon (eds.), *Le Deuxième Âge du fer en Auvergne et en Forez et ses relations avec régions voisines* (Sheffield, 1983); A. Cahen-Delhaye et al. (eds.), *Les Celtes en Belgique et dans le nord de la France: les fortifications de l'âge du fer* (Villeneuve d'Ascq, 1984); A. Duval, J. P. Bihan, and Y. Menez (eds.), *Les Gaulois d'Armorique: la fin de l'âge du fer en Europe tempérée*, Revue Archéologique de l'Ouest ([Rennes], 1990); D. Cliquet et al. (eds.), *Les Celtes en Normandie: les rites funéraires en Gaule (IIIème–Ier siècle avant J.-C.)*, Revue Archéologique de l'Ouest ([Rennes], 1993); M. Almagro-Gorbea and G. Ruiz Zapatero (eds.), *Los Celtas: Hispania y Europa* (Madrid, 1993); *Aquitania*, vol. 12: *L'Âge du fer en Europe sud-occidentale* (Toulouse, 1994); H. Dannheimer and R. Gebhard (eds.), *Das keltische Jahrtausend* (Mainz, 1993); and an exhibition catalogue, *Celtes, Belges, BoÁ¯ens, Rèmes, Volques* … (Mariemont, 2006).

Chapter 1 Visions of the Celts

The most challenging work on the question of validity of the concept of 'Celtic' is M. Chapman, *The Celts: The Construction of a Myth* (New York, 1992). It deserves careful reading as an essential preliminary. Other writers have been quick to espouse a politically correct disdain for the use of 'Celt', though usually without Chapman's depth of scholarship. A useful summary of the issues is provided by J. Collis, *The Celts: Origins, Myths and Inventions* (Stroud, 2003).

The Graeco-Roman vision of the Celts is admirably summed up in *Celts and the Classical World* by H. D. Rankin (London, 1987). The principal classical texts are usefully gathered in translation in J. T. Koch (ed.) in collaboration with J. Carey, *The Celtic Heroic Age: Literary Sources for Ancient Celtic Europe and Early Ireland and Wales* (4th edn., Aberystwyth, 2003). The seminal scholarly discussion of the works of the classical historian Poseidonius with the relevant classical texts in translation is J. J. Tierney, 'The Celtic Ethnography of Posidonius', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, 60C (1960), 189–275. A source worthy of study, and fascinating to read, is Julius Caesar's *Commentaries on the Gallic War*, of which there are many good modern translations (e.g. that of A. and P. Wiseman, *Julius Caesar: The Battle for Gaul* (London, 1980)). As the war reminiscences of a soldier and politician, they must be approached critically, but they contain much relevant detail. A helpful discussion of Caesar as a source for the Celts is given in a paper by D. Nash, 'Reconstructing Poseidonios' Celtic Ethnography: Some Considerations', *Britannia*, 7 (1976), 111–26.

The reawakening of the post-medieval world to the Celts and the emergence of Celtomania as part of the history of archaeology is treated with great panache by S. Piggott in three books: *William Stukeley: An Eighteenth-Century Antiquary* (1st edn., Oxford, 1950; rev. edn., London, 1985), *The Druids* (London, 1968), and *Ancient Britons and the Antiquarian Imagination: Ideas from the Renaissance to the Regency* (London, 1989). A more recent review is given in M. A. Morse, *How the Celts Came to Britain: Druids, Ancient Skulls and the Birth of Archaeology* (Stroud, 2005).

The contribution of archaeology to the early years of Celtic studies is a theme too massive to document here, but two period pieces, still well worthy of attention, are Napoleon III, *Histoire de Jules César*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1865–6), and R. E. M. Wheeler, *Maiden Castle, Dorset* (Oxford, 1943). In both cases the authors show how carefully planned excavations and fieldwork can be used to enliven, and sometimes to create, historical narrative. There is a new, and more accessible, edition of Napoleon III's classic published as *La Guerre des Gaules: Histoire de Jules César* (Paris, 2001). Napoleon III's pioneering research has been brought up to date by an inspired programme of fieldwork undertaken in 1991–7, published in three volumes: M. Reddé and S. von Schnurbein, *Alésia: fouilles et recherches franco-allemandes sur les travaux militaires romains autour du Mont-Auxois (1991–1997)* (Paris, 2001).

References for the 'Celtic from the West' debate will be given under reading for Chapter 3.

Chapter 2 Constructing the Historical Celts

The questions posed by the origins and development of the Celtic language are extremely complex and much of the literature is impenetrable to all but the most skilled scholar. Two books, however, C. Renfrew, *Archaeology and Language: The Puzzle of Indo-European Origins* (London, 1987) and J. P. Mallory, *In Search of the Indo-Europeans: Language, Archaeology, and Myth* (London, 1989), present the problems (from very different viewpoints) in clear uncluttered prose and offer valuable starting points. A helpful overview is offered by D. Greene, 'The Celtic Languages', in J. Raftery (ed.), *The Celts* (Cork, 1964). Thereafter things become difficult! Among the more scholarly works are: J. Whatmough, *The Dialects of Ancient Gaul: Prolegomena and Records of the Dialects* (Cambridge, Mass., 1970); D. E. Evans, *Gaulish Personal Names: A Study of Some Continental Celtic Formations* (Oxford, 1967); and A. Tovar, *Sprachen und Inschriften: Studien zum Mykenischen, Lateinischen und Hispanokeltischen* (Amsterdam, 1973). The complexities of the problems are also well exposed in three review papers: K. H. Schmidt, 'On the Celtic Languages of Continental Europe', *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies*, 28 (1979), 189–205; D. E. Evans, 'Celts and Germans', ibid., 29 (1981), 230–55; and D. E. Evans, 'The Labyrinth of Continental Celtic', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 65 (1979), 497–538. A major contribution to the debate, using place-name evidence, is P. Sims-Williams, *Ancient Celtic Place-Names in Europe and Asia Minor* (Oxford, 2006). The suggestion that the Celtic language may have begun as a lingua franca in the Atlantic zone has generated a literature of its own, which is introduced in the reading for Chapter 3.

The insular tradition of vernacular literature is an immense and specialist subject. The two central original sources are the Irish epic the *Táin Bó Cúailnge*, available as *The Táin* in elegant translation by T. Kinsella (Oxford, 1969), and the Welsh epic *The Mabinogion*, tr. J. Gantz (Harmondsworth, 1976), which includes a helpful introduction. The most accessible introduction to the complexities of the Irish literature is M. Dillon, *Early Irish Literature* (Chicago, 1948), which is usefully augmented by G. Murphy, *The Ossianic Lore and Romantic Tales of*

Medieval Ireland (Dublin, 1955; rev. edn., Cork, 1971), but the most comprehensive, readable treatment of the vernacular literature is J. MacKillop, *Myths and Legends of the Celts* (London, 2005). The classic attempt to use the Irish literature to present a picture of Iron Age society is K. Jackson, *The Oldest Irish Tradition: A Window on the Iron Age* (Cambridge, 1964). Jackson's stimulating, but over-simple, interpretation has been challenged in two important papers by J. P. Mallory, 'The Sword of the Ulster Cycle', in B. G. Scott (ed.), *Studies on Early Ireland: Essays in Honour of M. V. Duignan* (Belfast, 1981), 99–114 and 'Silver in the Ulster Cycle of Tales', in D. E. Evans, J. G. Griffith, and E. M. Jope (eds.), *Proceedings of the Seventh International Congress of Celtic Studies Held at Oxford from 10th to 15th July, 1983* (Oxford, 1986), 31–78 and is examined more comprehensively in the same author's *In Search of the Irish Dreamtime: Archaeology and Early Irish Literature* (London, 2016). The subject of the war chariot as depicted in the Irish literature provides a fascinating insight into the problems posed by using the texts. Three papers can be particularly recommended: D. Greene, 'The Chariot as Described in Irish Literature', in C. Thomas (ed.), *The Iron Age in the Irish Sea Province* (London, 1972), 59–73; P. Harbison, 'The Old Irish "(Chariot)"', *Antiquity*, 45 (1971), 171–7; and the relevant sections of S. Piggott's wide-ranging book *The Earliest Wheeled Transport: From the Atlantic Coast to the Caspian Sea* (London, 1983), in particular pp. 195–238. For the law tracts, F. Kelly, *A Guide to Early Irish Law* (Dublin, 1988; rev. edn., 2009) is an invaluable introduction.

The contribution of archaeology has been immense and the major texts will be referred to in the pages that follow. The subject of Celtic art will be considered more fully under Chapter 10.

Chapter 3 In the Beginning: 5500–1300 BC

The possibility that the Celtic language may have originated in the Atlantic zone of Europe as a lingua franca was being discussed in the last decade of the twentieth century and was presented as part of an archaeological narrative in B. Cunliffe, *Facing the Ocean: The Atlantic and its Peoples, 8000 BC–AD 1500* (Oxford, 2001), 293–7. It was restated in the same author's *The Celts: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford, 2003). The argument was roundly rejected from a linguistic point of view by G. R. Isaac in 'The Nature and Origins of the Celtic Languages: Atlantic Seaways, Italo-Celtic and Other Paralinguistic Misapprehensions', *Studia Celtica*, 38 (2005), 49–58. Since then the debate has continued and much new evidence has been presented by both sides in: B. Cunliffe and J. T. Koch (eds.), *Celtic from the West: Alternative Perspectives from Archaeology, Genetics, Language and Literature* (Oxford, 2010); J. T. Koch and B. Cunliffe (eds.), *Celtic from the West 2: Rethinking the Bronze Age and the Arrival of Indo-European in Atlantic Europe* (Oxford, 2013); and J. T. Koch and B. Cunliffe (eds.), *Celtic from the West 3: Atlantic Europe in the Metal Ages—Questions of Shared Language* (Oxford, 2016). A reader who has mastered these three volumes, amounting to 1100 pages, will have acquired an informed idea about the strengths and weaknesses of the arguments.

The Celtic debate is not made any easier by disagreement over the way in which the Indo-European language was first introduced into Europe. The hypothesis that it arrived with the first farmers from Anatolia is presented by C. Renfrew in *Archaeology and Language: The Puzzle of Indo-European Origins* (London, 1987) while the traditional alternative view that the language came from the steppe is championed in J. P. Mallory, *In Search of the Indo-Europeans: Language, Archaeology and Myth* (London, 1989). Three important papers discussing the results of computerized analysis of word lists tend to support the Anatolian hypothesis: R. D. Gray and Q. D. Atkinson, 'Language-tree Divergence Times Support the Anatolian Theory of Indo-European Origin', *Nature*, 426 (2003), 435–9; Q. Atkinson et al., 'From Words to Dates: Wine into Water, Mathemagic or Phylogenetic Inference?', *Transactions of the*

Philological Society 103 (2005), 193–219; and R. Bouckaert et al., ‘Mapping the Origins and Expansion of the Indo-European Language Family’, *Science*, 337 (2012), 957–60.

The fact that Celtic was spoken in Iberia at an early date has long posed difficulties for those who believed that the language was introduced to the far west from west central Europe. The classic work on the Iberian Indo-European languages is J. Untermann (ed.), *Monumenta Linguarum Hispanicarum*, iv: *Die tartessischen, keltiberischen und lusitanischen Inschriften* (Wiesbaden, 1997). The recent demonstration that the inscriptions on the stelae of south-western Iberia were Celtic has had significant implications for the ‘Celtic from the West’ debate. The two key publications are J. T. Koch, *Tartessian: Celtic in the South-west at the Dawn of History* (Aberystwyth, 2009) and the same author’s *Tartessian 2: The Inscription of Mesas do Castelinho ro and the Verbal Complex. Preliminaries to Historical Phonology* (Aberystwyth, 2011).

Since about 2005 new work on the ancient DNA of European populations has begun to be published, though the sample sizes have been very small and the sampled population very scattered. Some use of this data has been made available in J. Manco, *Blood of the Celts: The New Ancestral Story* (London, 2015). It is very early days and great care has to be taken in interpreting data of this kind, especially in attempting to link ancient DNA to language. A very revealing assessment of the present state of knowledge, highlighting the dangers of being over-enthusiastic, is given in a judicious paper by M. Pala, P. Soares, and M. B. Richards, ‘Archaeogenetic and Palaeogenetic Evidence for Metal Age Mobility in Europe’, in J. T. Koch and B. Cunliffe (eds.), *Celtic from the West 3: Atlantic Europe in the Metal Ages—Questions of Shared Language* (Oxford, 2016), 351–84.

Chapter 4 The Atlantic System: 1300–200 BC

The development of connectivity along the Atlantic face of Europe is discussed in detail in B. Cunliffe, *Facing the Ocean: The Atlantic and its Peoples, 8000 BC–AD 1500* (Oxford, 2001) and many of the papers published in the three volumes of *Celtic from the West* (details under further reading for Chapter 3) are relevant to the theme. Britain’s relationship to the Atlantic system is explored in B. Cunliffe, *Britain Begins* (Oxford, 2013). The famous Huelva hoard is fully discussed in M. Ruiz-Gálvez Priego, *Ritos de paso y puntos de paso: La RÁa de Huelva en el mundo del Bronce Final Europeo* (Madrid, 1995). Other specialist studies include: R. J. Harrison, *Symbols and Warriors: Images of the European Bronze Age* (Bristol, 2004); D. Brandherm and C. Burgess, ‘Carp’s-Tongue Problems’, in F. Verse et al. (eds.), Durch die Zeiten … Festschrift für Albrecht Jockenhövel zum 65. Geburtstag (Rahden, 2008), 133–68; S. Gerloff with a contribution by J. P. Northover, *Atlantic Cauldrons and Buckets of the Late Bronze and Early Iron Ages in Western Europe: With a Review of Comparable Vessels from Central Europe and Italy* (Stuttgart, 2010); C. Burgess and B. O’Connor, ‘Bronze Age Rotary Spits: Finds Old and New, Some False, Some True’, in H. Roche et al. (eds.), *From Megaliths to Metals: Essays in Honour of George Eogan* (Oxford, 2004), 184–99; and S. Bowman and S. Needham, ‘The Dunaverney and Little Thetford Flesh-hooks: History, Technology and their Position within the Later Bronze Age Atlantic Zone Feasting Complex’, *Antiquaries Journal*, 87 (2007), 53–108.

For more general considerations of the Atlantic Bronze Age see: A. Coffyn, *Le Bronze final atlantique dans la Péninsule Ibérique* (Paris, 1985); C. Chevillot and A. Coffyn (eds.), *L’Âge du bronze atlantique: ses faciès, de l’Écosse à l’Andalousie et leur relations avec le bronze continental et la Méditerranée* (Beynac-et-Cazenac, 1991); S. Oliveira Jorge (ed.), *Existe uma Idade do Bronze Atlântico?* (Lisbon, 1998); M. Ruiz-Gálvez Priego, *La Europa atlántica en la Edad del Bronce: Un viaje a las raÁces de la Europa occidental* (Barcelona, 1998); and C. Burgess and B. O’Connor, ‘Iberia, the Atlantic Bronze Age and the Mediterranean’, in S. Celestino, N. Rafel, and X.-L. Armada (eds.), *Contacto cultural entre* *el Mediterráneo y el Atlántico (siglos XII–VIII ane): La precolonización a debate* (Madrid, 2008), 41–58.

The best source for the Phoenicians in Iberia is M. E. Aubet, *The Phoenicians and the West: Politics, Colonies and Trade* (2nd edn., Cambridge, 2001). After this volume was published very early Phoenician material was found at Huelva. This is reported in F. González de Canales Cerisola, L. S. Pichardo, and J. L. Gómez, *El emporio fenicio precolonial de Huelva (ca. 900–777 a. C.)* (Madrid, 2004) and in F. González de Canales, 'The Pre-colonial Phoenician Emporium of Huelva ca. 900–700 BC', *Bulletin Antieke Beschaving*, 81 (2006), 13–29. The same issue of the latter journal contains a paper by A. J. Nijboer and J. van der Plicht, 'An Interpretation of the Radiocarbon Determinations of the Oldest Indigenous Phoenician Stratum Thus Far, Excavated at Huelva, Tartessos (South-west Spain)', 31–6. The Phoenician enclaves along the Atlantic coast of Iberia are presented in detail in A. M. Arruda, *Los fenicios en Portugal: Fenicios y mundo indigena en el centro y sur de Portugal (siglos VIII–V a. C.)* (Barcelona, 2000) and in a shortened and updated paper, 'Phoenician Colonization on the Atlantic Coast of the Iberian Peninsula', in M. Dietler and C. López-Ruiz (eds.), *Colonial Encounters in Ancient Iberia: Phoenician, Greek, and Indigenous Relations* (Chicago, 2009), 113–30. Evidence for Phoenician and Carthaginian trading along the Atlantic coast of Iberia beyond the Phoenician enclaves is discussed in A. González-Ruibal, 'Facing Two Seas: Mediterranean and Atlantic Contacts in the North-west of Iberia in the First Millennium BC', *Oxford Journal of Archaeology*, 23 (2004), 287–317.

The most convenient translation of the *Ora Maritima* is J. P. Murphy (ed. and tr.), *Rufus Festus Avienus: Ora Maritima. A Description of the Seacoast from Brittany to Marseilles* (Chicago, 1977). For the argument that the Massiliot Periplus used by Avienus did not go beyond Cape Finisterre in north-western Iberia see B. Cunliffe, *The Extraordinary Voyage of Pytheas the Greek* (London, 2001), 42–9.

The question of the Celtiberian language is most simply dealt with by A. Tovar in *The Ancient Languages of Spain and Portugal* (New York, 1961). A more detailed treatment will be found in his *Sprachen und Inschriften: Studien zum Mykenischen, Lateinischen und Hispanokeltischen* (Amsterdam, 1973) and in J. Untermann (ed.), *Monumenta Linguarum Hispanicarum*, iv: *Die tartessischen,* *keltiberischen und lusitanischen Inschriften* (Wiesbaden, 1997). The standard works on the Iron Age of Iberia and the ‘Celtic’ problem are: E. Sangmeister, ‘Die Kelten in Spanien’, *Madrider Mitteilungen* 1 (1960), 75–100; W. Schüle, Die Meseta-Kulturen der Iberischen Halbinsel: Mediterrane und eurasische Elemente in früheisenzeitliche Kulturen Südwesteuropas, 2 vols. (Berlin, 1969) and M. Lenerz-de Wilde, *Iberia Celtica: Archäologische Zeugnisse keltischer Kultur auf der Pyrenäenhalbinsel*, 2 vols. (Stuttgart, 1991), which were all written at a time when it was believed that the Celts entered Spain from west central Europe. For a Spanish view of their archaeology, M. Almagro-Gorbea and G. Ruiz Zapatero (eds.), *Los celtas: Hispania y Europa* (Madrid, 1993) has much to offer, most notably the papers by: M. Almagro-Gorbea, ‘Los celtas en la Península Ibérica: origen y personalidad cultural’ (pp. 121–73); L. A. García Morena, ‘Organizacíon sociopolítica de los celtas en la Península Ibérica’ (pp. 327–55); J. de Hoz, ‘Testimonios lingüisticos relativos al problema céltico en la Península Ibérica’ (pp. 357–407); and F. M. Simón, ‘La religiosidad en la Céltica hispana’ (pp. 477–512). F. M. Simón has also written a small book on the subject, *Die Religion im keltischen Hispanien* (Budapest, 1998). B. Cunliffe and S. Keay (eds.), *Social Complexity and the Development of Towns in Iberia: From the Copper Age to the Second Century AD* (Oxford, 1995) contains a number of papers of relevance, including M. Almagro-Gorbea, ‘From Hillforts to *Oppida* in “(Celtic)” Iberia’ (pp. 175–207) and G. Ruiz Zapatero and J. R. Alvarez-SanchÁs, ‘Las Cogotas: *Oppida* and the Roots of Urbanism in the Spanish Meseta’ (pp. 209–35). Three detailed regional studies of a specialist nature can be recommended: M. Almagro-Gorbea and A. M. MartÁn (eds.), *Castros y oppida en Extremadura* (Madrid, 1994); L. Berrocal-Rangel, *Los pueblos célticos del suroeste de la PenÁnsula Ibérica* (Madrid, 1992); and A. Coelho Ferreira da Silva, *A cultura castreja no noroeste de Portugal* (PaÁ§os de Ferreira, 1986).

Finally there are two beautifully illustrated exhibition catalogues supported by lengthy specialist essays well worth consulting: *Celtas y vettones: Torreón de los Guzmanes, Iglesia de Santo Tomé el Viejo, Ávila, septiembre–diciembre 2001* (Ávila, 2001) and *CeltÁberos: Tras la estela de Numancia* (Soria, 2005).

We turn now to the northern part of the Atlantic zone. Gundlingen swords are considered in S. Gerloff, ‘Hallstatt Fascination: “(Hallstatt)”

Buckets, Swords and Chapes from Britain and Ireland', in H. Roche et al. (eds.), *From Megaliths to Metal: Essays in Honour of George Eogan* (Oxford, 2004), 124–54 and B. O'Connor, 'Llyn Fawr Metalwork in Britain: A Review', in C. Haselgrove and R. Pope (eds.), *The Earlier Iron Age in Britain and the Near Continent* (Oxford, 2007), 64–79. A general background to the relationship between Britain and the Continent is given in B. Cunliffe, *Iron Age Communities in Britain: An Account of England, Scotland and Wales from the Seventh Century* BC *until the Roman Conquest* (4th edn., Abingdon, 2004). The classic work on the stamped pottery of Brittany is F. Schwappach, 'Stempelverzierte Keramik von Armorica', in O.-H. Frey (ed.), Marburger Beiträge zur Archäologie der Kelten: Festschrift für Wolfgang Dehn zum 60. Geburtstag am 6. Juli 1969, Fundberichte aus Hessen, Beiheft, 1 (Bonn, 1969), 213–93. A general account of the Breton Iron Age will be found in P.-R. Giot, J. Briard, and L. Pape, *Protohistoire de la Bretagne* (2nd edn., Rennes, 1995).

Chapter 5 West Central Europe and the Mediterranean: 1300–450 BC

As a general background to this chapter the relevant chapters of B. Cunliffe (ed.), *The Oxford Illustrated Prehistory of Europe* (Oxford, 1994) will be useful. The same author's *Europe between the Oceans: Themes and Variations, 9000 BC–AD 1000* (London, 2008) offers a general overview.

The subject of the early chiefdoms has excited much discussion in recent years following the publication of an inspiring paper by S. Frankenstein and M. Rowlands, 'The Internal Structure and Regional Context of Early Iron Age Society in South-western Germany', *Bulletin of the Institute of Archaeology, London*, 15 (1978), 73–112. A different approach with much background material is presented in W. Kimmig, 'Die griechische Kolonisation im westlichen Mittelmeergebiet und ihre Wirkung auf die Landschaften des westlichen Mitteleuropa', *Jahrbuch des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums Mainz*, 30 (1983), 5–78. A much less detailed treatment of the same material is given in B. Cunliffe, *Greeks, Romans and Barbarians: Spheres of Interaction* (London, 1988). Other works discussing this general subject area include: P. S. Wells, *Culture Contact and Culture Change: Early Iron Age Central Europe and the Mediterranean World* (Cambridge, 1980); P. Brun, *Princes et princesses de la Celtique: le premier âge du fer en Europe (850–450 av. J.-C.)* (Paris, 1987); and the same author's 'Les Princes celtes et la Méditerranée', *Actes des Rencontres de l'École du Louvre, 25–27 novembre 1987* (Paris, 1988), 129–44; C. Pare, ' Fürstensitze,, Celts and the Mediterranean World: Developments in West Hallstatt Culture in the 6th and 5th Centuries BC', *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society*, 57 (1991), 183–202; and B. Chaume, 'La Place de la France orientale dans le réseau des échanges à longues distances du bronze final au Hallstatt final', in M. Guggisberg (ed.), *Die Hydria von Grächwil: Zur Funktion und Rezeption mediterraner Importe in Mitteleuropa im 6. und 5. Jahrhundert v. Chr.* (Berne, 2004), 79–106.

The question of feasting and the significance of Mediterranean wine is discussed in M. Dietler, 'Driven by Drink: The Role of Drinking in the

Political Economy and the Case of Early Iron Age France', *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology*, 9 (1990), 352–406. The complexity of wine importation into west central Europe is examined in F. Sacchetti, 'Transport Amphorae in the West Hallstatt Zone: Reassessing Socio-economic Dynamics and Long-distance Mediterranean Exchange in Western Central Europe in the Early Iron Age', *Oxford Journal of Archaeology*, 35 (2016), 247–65.

Among the more significant works on princely settlements are: W. Kimmig, *Die Heuneburg an der oberen Donau* (Stuttgart, 1968); W. Kimmig (ed.), Importe und mediterrane Einflüsse auf der Heuneburg (Mainz, 2000); E. Gersbach, *Ausgrabungsmethodik und Stratigraphie der Heuneburg*, i (Mainz, 1989); E. Gersbach, *Baubefunde der Perioden IVc–IVa der Heuneburg* (Mainz, 1995); D. Krausse and M. Fernández-Götz, 'Die Heuneburg: Neue Forschungen zur Entwicklung einer späthallstattzeitlichen Stadt', in R. Röber et al. (eds.), *Die Welt der Kelten: Zentren der Macht—Kostbarkeiten der Kunst* (Ostfildern Konstanz, 2012), 116–23; M. Fernández-Götz and D. Krausse, 'Rethinking Early Iron Age Urbanisation in Central Europe: The Heuneburg Site and its Archaeological Environment', *Antiquity*, 87 (2013), 473–87; R. Krause, Der Ipf: Fürstensitz im Fokus der Archäologie (Stuttgart, 2015); P. Drda and A. Rybová, *Akropole na hradiÅ¡ti Závist v 6.–4. stol. pr ˇ . Kr. = Akropolis von Závist im 6.–4. Jh. v. Chr.* (Prague, 2008); P.-Y. Milcent, 'Résidences aristocratiques et expérience urbaine hallstattiennes en France (VI^{e}–V^{e} siècles av. J.-C.)', in S. Sievers and M. Schönfelder (eds.), *Die Frage der Protourbanisation in der Eisenzeit = La Question de la proto-urbanisation à l'âge du fer* (Bonn, 2012), 91–113; B. Chaume, *Vix et son territoire à l'âge du fer: fouilles du mont Lassois et environnement du site princier* (Montagnac, 2001); and P.-Y. Milcent (ed.), *Bourges-Avaricum: un centre proto-urbain celtique du V^{e} s. av. J.-C.* (Bourges, 2007).

Of the many princely tombs excavated the following are among the more spectacular: C. Rolley (ed.), *La Tombe princière de Vix*, 2 vols. (Paris, 2003); G. Riek and H.-J. Hundt, Der Hohmichele: Ein Fürstengrabhügel der späten Hallstattzeit bei der Heuneburg (Berlin, 1962); J. Biel, Der Keltenfürst von Hochdorf (Stuttgart, 1985); and O.-H. Frey and F.-R. Herrmann, 'Ein frühkeltischer Fürstengrabhügel am Glauberg im Wetteraukreis, Hessen: Bericht über die Forschungen 1994–1996', *Germania*, 75 (1997), 459–522.

Chapter 6 The Migrations: 450–50 BC

The classical sources, which provide the main ‘historical’ account of the migrations, are conveniently brought together and discussed by H. D. Rankin in *Celts and the Classical World* (London, 1987). Two other general discussions, L. Pauli, ‘Early Celtic Society: Two Centuries of Wealth and Turmoil in Central Europe’ and D. Nash, ‘Celtic Territorial Expansion and the Mediterranean World’, both in T. C. Champion and J. V. S. Megaw (eds.), *Settlement and Society: Aspects of West European Prehistory in the First Millennium B.C.* (Leicester, 1985), 23–44 and 45–68, add significantly to the debate. For a detailed study of the La Tène homeland see M. Diepeveen-Jansen, *People, Ideas and Goods: New Perspectives on ‘Celtic Barbarians’ in Western and Central Europe (500–250 BC)* (Amsterdam, 2001). More specific regional studies include V. Kruta’s ‘Les BoÁ¯ens de Cispadane: essai de paléoethnographie celtique’, *Études celtiques*, 17 (1980), 7–32 and the same author’s ‘Les Sénons de l’Adriatique d’après l’archéologie (prolégomènes)’, *Études celtiques*, 18 (1981), 7–38 present a range of evidence from the Po valley. The proceedings of a conference, P.-M. Duval and V. Kruta (eds.), *Les Mouvements celtiques du V*^{e} *au I*^{er} *siècle avant notre ère* (Paris, 1979), contain sixteen individual papers, together covering much of Europe. For the Middle Danube region, J. Todorovicć, *Skordisci: Istorija i kultura* (Novi Sad, 1974) provides a detailed coverage, while M. Szabó, *The Celtic Heritage in Hungary* (Budapest, 1971) offers a general assessment of Transdanubia and the Great Hungarian Plain. Evidence for Celtic culture in Poland is discussed in detail by Z. Wozćniak, *Osadnictwo celtyckie w Polsce* (with an English summary) (Wrocław, 1970). Evidence for Celtic movements further east is explored in three detailed papers: M. J. Treister, ‘The Celts in the North Pontic Area: A Reassessment’, *Antiquity*, 67 (1993), 789–804; M. Shchukin, ‘The Celts in Eastern Europe’, *Oxford Journal of Archaeology*, 14 (1995), 201–27; and M. B. Shchukin, G. F. Tchebotarenko, and T. A. Shcherbakova, ‘Two Finds Belonging to La Tène and Roman Periods from the Moldavian Republic’, *Oxford Journal of Archaeology*, 12 (1993), 67–75. References to Celtic movements and settlement in Asia Minor will be given under Chapter 8. The intriguing question of reflux movements from east to west is examined in a detailed study by V. Kruta, ‘Les Celtes des Gaules d’après l’archéologie’, in K. H. Schmidt (ed.), *Geschichte und Kultur der Kelten: Vorbereitungskonferenz, 25.–28. Oktober 1982 in Bonn* (Heidelberg, 1986), 33–51. The classic Celtic folk movement, that of the Helvetii, is described in first-hand detail by Julius Caesar in the first book of his *Commentaries on the Gallic War*.

New scientific methods including isotope analysis and ancient DNA are beginning to provide new data on the mobility of the Celts. For one informative study see M. Scheeres et al., ‘Evidence for “(Celtic Migrations)”? Strontium Isotope Analysis at the Early La Tène (LT B) Cemeteries of Nebringen (Germany) and Monte Bibele (Italy)’, *Journal of Archaeological Science*, 40 (2013), 3614–25.

Chapter 7 The Communities of the Atlantic Façade

The question of how to interpret the *Ora Maritima* and the extent of the Phoenician mercantile activity along the Atlantic coast of Iberia was raised in Chapter 4. In addition to arguing that the Massiliot Periplus did not go beyond Cape Finisterre in Galicia, B. Cunliffe in *The Extraordinary Voyage of Pytheas the Greek* (London, 2001), 42–9 lays out evidence for supposing that Pytheas' journey from Massalia started overland and that he first took ship at the Gironde before exploring Brittany and Britain.

Evidence for the expansion of La Tène culture to Atlantic Europe is extensive and is treated in very many diverse sources. For Brittany see F. Schwappach, 'Stempelverzierte Keramik von Armorica', in O.-H. Frey (ed.), Marburger Beiträge zur Archäologie der Kelten: Festschrift für Wolfgang Dehn zum 60. Geburtstag am 6. Juli 1969, Fundberichte aus Hessen, Beiheft, 1 (Bonn, 1969), 213–93 and B. Cunliffe, 'Social and Economic Contacts between Western France and Britain in the Early and Middle La Tène Period', in J.-P. Daugas et al. (eds.), *La Bretagne et l'Europe préhistoriques: mémoire en hommage à Pierre-Roland Giot*, Revue archaéologique de l'Ouest, Supplement, 2 (Rennes, 1990), 245–51. The introduction of La Tène art styles to Ireland is dealt with thoroughly in B. Raftery, *Pagan Celtic Ireland: The Enigma of the Irish Iron Age* (London, 1994) and J. Waddell, *The Prehistoric Archaeology of Ireland* (rev. edn., Dublin, 2010), Chapter 8. For a carefully balanced discussion of Irish prehistory dealing with language and genetic evidence, see J. P. Mallory, *The Origins of the Irish* (London, 2013). Evidence for La Tène influences in Iberia is gathered in M. Lenerz-de Wilde, *Iberia Celtica: Archäologische Zeugnisse keltischer Kultur aus der Pyrenäenhalbinsel* (Stuttgart, 1991).

For an introduction to regional variations along the Atlantic faÁ§ade, a useful introduction is B. Cunliffe, *Facing the Ocean: The Atlantic and its People, 8000 BC–AD 1500* (Oxford, 2001), Chapter 8. A number of specialist papers addressing a variety of relevant issues are brought together in T. Moore and X.-L. Armada (eds.), *Atlantic Europe in the First Millennium BC: Crossing the Divide* (Oxford, 2011). For Brittany, the most accessible introduction is P.-R. Giot, J. Briard, and L. Pape, *Protohistoire* *de la Bretagne* (2nd edn., Rennes, 1995). Still the best account of Breton hillforts is to be found in M. Wheeler and K. M. Richardson, *Hill-forts of Northern France: With an Appendix on Muri Gallici by M. Aylwin Cotton* (Oxford, 1957). Excavations on the promontory fort at Le Yaudet are detailed in B. Cunliffe and P. Gailliou, *Les Fouilles du Yaudet en Ploulec'h, Côtes-d'Armor*, ii: *Le Site: de la préhistoire à la fin de l'empire gaulois* (Oxford, 2005). The decorated stelae are considered in a fascinating paper, M.-Y. Daire and A. Villard, 'Les Stèles de l'âge du fer à décors géométriques et curvilignes: état de la question dans l'Ouest armoricain', *Revue archéologique de l'Ouest*, 13 (1996), 123–56. Trade between Brittany and southern Britain is considered in S. McGrail, 'Cross-Channel Seamanship and Navigation in the Late First Millennium BC', *Oxford Journal of Archaeology*, 2 (1983), 299–337 and B. Cunliffe, 'Britain, the Veneti and Beyond', ibid., 1 (1982), 39–68. For an ingenious consideration of the tin trade, see C. F. C. Hawkes, 'Ictis Disentangled, and the British Tin Trade', ibid., 3 (1984), 211–33.

Evidence for the different Iron Age peoples of Britain is introduced in B. Cunliffe, *Iron Age Communities in Britain: An Account of England, Scotland and Wales from the Seventh Century* BC *until the Roman Conquest* (4th edn., Abingdon, 2005). For the communities living in Scotland: I. Armit, *Celtic Scotland: Iron Age Scotland in its European Context* (2nd edn., London, 2005) and B. Ballin Smith and I. Banks (eds.), *In the Shadow of the Brochs: The Iron Age in Scotland* (Stroud, 2002). The Welsh material is explored in F. Lynch, S. Aldhouse-Green, and J. L. Davies, *Prehistoric Wales* (Stroud, 2000), Chapter 4. The Iron Age of Ireland is thoroughly covered in the books by B. Raftery (1994), J. Waddell (2010), and Mallory (2013) detailed in the second paragraph above. To these can be added the various specialist papers in the journal *Emania: Bulletin of the Navan Research Group*, 9 (1991). More recent research on the Irish Iron Age is presented in the Discovery Programme's publication *Late Iron Age and 'Roman' Ireland* (Dublin, 2014). For the detailed report on the excavation of the dramatic fortresses of Dún Aonghasa: C. Cotter, *The Western Stone Forts Project: Excavations at Dún Aonghasa and Dún Eoghanachta*, i–iii (Dublin and York, 2012).

The coastal zone of northern Gaul is fully treated in N. Roymans, *Tribal Societies in Northern Gaul: An Anthropological Perspective* (Amsterdam, 1990) and in various contributions in L. P. Louwe Kooijmans et al. (eds.), *The Prehistory of the Netherlands*, ii (Amsterdam, 2005). For the south-west of Gaul three specialist monographs provide much detail: R. Boudet, *L'Âge du fer récent dans la partie méridionale de l'estuaire Girondin: du V*^{e} *au I*^{er} *siècle avant notre ère* (Périgeux, 1987); J.-P. Mohen, *L'Âge du fer en Aquitaine du VIII*^{e} *au III*^{e} *siècle avant Jésus-Christ* (Paris, 1980); and L. Laporte (ed.), *L'Estuaire de la Charente de la protohistoire au Moyen Âge: La Challonnière et Mortantambe (Charente-Maritime)* (Paris, 1998).

Finally, the Iron Age of north-western Iberia is thoroughly treated in a number of books including: A. Coelho Ferreira da Silva, *A cultura castreja no noroeste de Portugal* (PaÁ§os de Ferreira, 1986); A. Fanjul Peraza, *Los castros de Asturias: Una revisión territorial y funcional* (Teverga, 2004); J. Camino Mayor, *Los castros marÁtimos en Asturias* (Oviedo, 1995); and J. R. Álvarez-Sanchis, *GuÁa arqueológica de castros y verracos: Provincia de Ávila* (Ávila, 2006).

Chapter 8 Celts and Others on the Eastern Fringes

As background reading to the horse-riding peoples of the Pontic region, E. D. Phillips, *The Royal Hordes: Nomad Peoples of the Steppes* (London, 1965) provides a brief but wide-ranging introduction, while R. Rolle, *The World of the Scythians* (English edn., London, 1989) offers a more detailed account of one of the major ethnic groups. References have already been given to Celts in the Pontic region under Chapter 6. Celtic settlement in eastern Thrace is explained in detail in L. F. Vagalinski, *In Search of Celtic Tylis in Thrace (III C. BC)* (Sofia, 2010). The Celtic settlement in Asia Minor was presented from a historical perspective by W. M. Ramsey in his seminal *A Historical Commentary on St Paul's Epistle to the Galatians* (2nd edn., London, 1900). The most recent scholarly account is S. Mitchell, *Anatolia: Land, Men, and Gods in Asia Minor*, i: *The Celts in Anatolia and the Impact of Roman Rule* (Oxford, 1993). More detailed assessments of the fortifications are given in S. Mitchell, 'Blucium and Peium: The Galatian Forts of King Deiotarus', *Anatolian Studies*, 24 (1974), 61–75. The distribution of Celtic artefacts is considered by A. Müller-Karpe, 'Neue galatische Funde aus Anatolien', *Istanbuler Mitteilungen*, 38 (1988), 189–99. The monuments depicting Celts set up at Pergamum are discussed by: E. Künzl, *Die Kelten des Epigonos von Pergamon* (Würzburg, 1971); R. Wenning, *Die Galateranatheme Attalos I: Eine Untersuchung zum Bestand und zur Nachwirkung pergamenischer Skulptur* (Berlin, 1978); and L. Hannestad, 'Greeks and Celts: The Creation of a Myth', in P. Bilde et al. (eds.), *Centre and Periphery in the Hellenistic World* (Aarhus, 1996), 15–38.

Claims that sacrificed humans found at Gordion reflect Celtic ritual behaviour are to be found in P. Selinsky, 'Celtic Ritual Activity at Gordion, Turkey: Evidence from Mortuary Contexts and Skeletal Analysis', *International Journal of Osteoarchaeology*, 25 (2012), 213–25.

Chapter 9 Warfare and Society

The nature of Celtic warfare and social systems can be gleaned from various of the classical texts usefully discussed in Chapters 4–6 of H. D. Rankin, *Celts and the Classical World* (London, 1987). Thoroughly to be recommended for its insight into mercenary activity is A. Rustoiu, ‘A Journey to Mediterranean: Peregrinations of a Celtic Warrior from Transylvania’, *Studia Universitatis ‘BabesÂ¸-Bolyai’, Historia*, 51 (2006), 42–85. A succinct account of the archaeological evidence for warfare is offered in W. F. and J. N. G. Ritchie, *Celtic Warriors* (Princes Risborough, 1985). The sword is given thorough treatment by R. Pleiner in *The Celtic Sword* (Oxford, 1993). For shields and spears, see A. Rapin, ‘Boucliers et lances’, in J.-L. Brunaux and A. Rapin, *Gournay. 2. Boucliers et lances, dépôts et trophées* (Paris, 1988), 7–174. Works on chariots have already been mentioned in the bibliography for Chapter 2, to which should be added P. Harbison, ‘The Chariot of Celtic Funerary Tradition’, in O.-H. Frey (ed.), *Marburger Beiträge zur Archäologie der Kelten: Festschrift für Wolfgang Dehn zum 60. Geburtstag am 6. Juli 1969,, Fundberichte aus Hessen, Beiheft, 1 (Bonn, 1969)*, 34–58 and I. M. Stead, ‘The Celtic Chariot’, *Antiquity*, 39 (1965), 259–65. For an excellent introduction to hillforts, see I. Ralston, *Celtic Fortifications* (Stroud, 2006). Also to be recommended as broad overviews are J.-L. Brunaux and B. Lambot, *Guerre et armement chez les Gaulois: 450–52 av. J.-C.* (Paris, 1987) and J.-L. Brunaux, *Guerre et religion en Gaule: essai d’anthropologie celtique* (Paris, 2004).

An ambitious attempt at reconstructing Celtic social systems is to be found in C. L. Crumley, *Celtic Social Structure: The Generation of Archaeologically Testable Hypotheses from Literary Evidence* (Ann Arbor, 1974). D. Nash, ‘Territory and State Formation in Central Gaul’, in D. Green, C. Haselgrove, and M. Spriggs (eds.), *Social Organization and Settlement: Contributions from Anthropology, Archaeology and Geography*, ii (Oxford, 1978), 455–75 remains a classic account of the changes in Gaulish society in the face of Rome. On the importance of feasting in maintaining social order: M. Dietler, ‘Driven by Drink: The Role of Drinking in the Political Economy and the Case of Early Iron Age

France’, *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology*, 9 (1990), 352–406 and the same author’s *Consumption and Colonial Encounters in the Rhône Basin of France: A Study of Early Iron Age Political Economy* (Lattes, 2005). A number of interesting papers are to be found in B. Arnold and D. B. Gibson (eds.), *Celtic Chiefdom, Celtic State: The Evolution of Complex Social Systems in Prehistoric Europe* (Cambridge, 1995).

Chapter 10 The Arts of the Migration Period

The subject of Celtic art has been dealt with extensively in a number of general books. The classic text is P. Jacobsthal, *Early Celtic Art* (Oxford, 1944), which has set the scene for everything which follows, but the most helpful overview, copiously illustrated, is R. and V. Megaw, *Celtic Art: From its Beginnings to the Book of Kells* (2nd edn., London, 2001), which is the essential starting-point; the volume also has an extensive bibliography arranged thematically. More recent, thought-provoking studies are contained in D. Garrow, C. Gosden, and J. D. Hill (eds.), *Rethinking Celtic* Art (Oxford, 2008) and D. Garrow and C. Gosden, *Technologies of Enchantment? Exploring Celtic Art: 400 BC to AD 100* (Oxford, 2012), both to be highly recommended. Other broadly based older studies but still of value include: N. K. Sandars's elegant and emotive chapter in her *Prehistoric Art in Ancient Europe* (2nd edn., Harmondsworth, 1985); P-M. Duval, *Les Celtes* (Paris, 1977); P.-M. Duval and C. Hawkes (eds.), *Celtic Art in Ancient Europe: Five Protohistoric Centuries* (London, 1976); M. Green, *Celtic Art: Reading the Messages* (London, 1996); and P.-M. Duval and V. Kruta (eds.), *L'Art celtique de la période d'expansion: IV^{e} et III^{e} siècles avant notre ère* (Geneva, 1982).

A number of excellent regional surveys exist, among which may be listed: M. Szabó and E. Petres, *A keleti kelta müvészet —Eastern Celtic Art* (text largely in English) (Székesfehérvár, 1974); *L'Art celtique en Gaule: Collections des musées de Province* (Ministère de la Culture, Paris, 1983); and A. Duval, *L'Art celtique de la Gaule au Musée des Antiquités nationales* (Paris, 1989). The standard work for Britain is E. M. Jope, *Early Celtic Art in the British Isles* (Oxford, 2000) but see also: I. Stead, *Celtic Art in Britain before the Roman Conquest* (2nd edn., London, 1996); V. and R. Megaw, *Early Celtic Art in Britain and Ireland* (repr. with revisions, Princes Risborough, 1994); M. MacGregor, *Early Celtic Art in North Britain: A Study of Decorative Metalwork from the Third Century B.C. to the Third Century A.D.*, 2 vols. (Leicester, 1976); and H. N. Savory, *Early Iron Age Art in Wales* (Cardiff, 1968). For Ireland the essential reading is B. Raftery, *A Catalogue of Irish Iron Age Antiquities*, 2 vols. (Marburg, 1983) and the same author's *La Tène in Ireland: Problems of*

Origin and Chronology (Marburg, 1984). Gold torcs are exhaustively treated in H. Hautenauve, *Les Torques d'or du second âge du fer en Europe: techniques, typologies et symbolique* (Rennes, 2005). Ceramic art is seldom dealt with as a theme, but a number of specialist papers on painted pottery will be found in the catalogue *La Céramique peinte celtique dans son contexte européen* (Reims, 1991), while F. Schwappach provides accounts of stamp-decorated pottery in *On the Chronology of the Eastern Early La Tène Pottery* (Bad Bramstedt, 1979) and in two papers, 'Die stempelverzierte Latène-Keramik aus den Gräbern von Braubach', *Bonner Jahrbücher,*, 177 (1977), 119–83 and 'Frühkeltischen Ornament zwischen Marne, Rhein und Moldau', *Bonner Jahrbücher,*, 173 (1973), 53–111. For Celtic coins the best overview is D. F. Allen, *The Coins of the Ancient Celts* (Edinburgh, 1980).

Chapter 11 Religious Systems

There is an extensive and fascinating literature on Celtic religious systems. Two books stand out both for their content and their literary merit: M.-L. Sjoestedt, *Gods and Heroes of the Celts* (English edn., London, 1949; repr. Dublin, 1994) and P. MacCana, *Celtic Mythology* (rev. edn., Feltham, 1983).

The Druids have received more than their fair share of attention. From the plethora of volumes good, bad, and indifferent, four can be strongly recommended, each offering something original to the debate: M. Aldhouse-Green, *Caesar's Druids: Story of an Ancient Priesthood* (New Haven and London, 2010) is a thoroughly scholarly account rooted in the archaeological evidence; R. Hutton, *Blood and Mistletoe: The History of the Druids in Britain* (New Haven and London, 2009) is an equally scholarly treatment, restricted to Britain but bringing the story on to more recent times. Among the older books, N. K. Chadwick, *The Druids* (Cardiff, 1966) is a thorough study of the classical sources, while S. Piggott, *The Druids* (London, 1968) is a comprehensive overview, elegantly written.

Other works on aspects of Celtic religion include: G. S. Olmsted, *The Gods of the Celts and the Indo-Europeans* (Innsbruck and Budapest, 1994); J. de Vries, *Keltische Religion* (Stuttgart, 1961); É. Thévenot, *Divinités et sanctuaires de la Gaule* (Paris, 1968); P.-M. Duval, *Les Dieux de la Gaule* (Paris, 1976); J.-L. Brunaux, *The Celtic Gauls: Gods, Rites, and Sanctuaries* (English edn., London, 1988); M. Green, *The Gods of the Celts* (Gloucester, 1986); and C. Sterckx, *Éléments de cosmogonie celtique* (Brussels, 1986). The significance of animals in religion and in propitiatory burials is considered in: M. Green, *Animals in Celtic Life and Myth* (London, 1992); P. Méniel, *Les Sacrifices d'animaux chez les Gaulois* (Paris, 1992); and B. Cunliffe, 'Pits, Preconceptions and Propitiation in the British Iron Age', *Oxford Journal of Archaeology*, 11 (1992), 69–83. On festivals and the measurement of time, see M. MacNeill, *The Festival of Lughnasa: A Study of the Survival of the Celtic Festival of the Beginning of Harvest* (London, 1962) and G. Olmsted, *The Gaulish Calendar: A Reconstruction from the Bronze Fragments from*

Coligny, with an Analysis of its Function as a Highly Accurate Lunar–Solar Predictor, as well as an Explanation of its Terminology and Development (Bonn, 1992).

A general overview of religious locations is provided by S. Piggott, 'Nemeton, Temenos, Bothros: Sanctuaries of the Ancient Celts', in [Accademia nazionale dei Lincei], *I Celti e la loro cultura nell'epoca pre-romana e romana nella Britannia: Conferenze* (Rome, 1978), 37–54. For *Viereckschanzen*, see K. Bittel, S. Schiek, and D. Müller, *Die keltischen Viereckschanzen* (Stuttgart, 1990). The most informative publications of the temple sites excavated in recent years are: J.-L. Brunaux, P. Méniel, and F. Poplin, *Gournay. 1. Les Fouilles sur le sanctuaire et l'oppidum (1975–1984)* (Amiens, 1985) and J.-L. Brunaux and A. Rapin, *Gournay. 2. Boucliers et lances, dépôts et trophées* (Paris, 1988); A. Woodward and P. Leach, *The Uley Shrines: Excavation of a Ritual Complex on West Hill, Uley, Gloucestershire, 1977–9* (London, 1993); and W. F. Grimes and J. Close-Brooks, 'The Excavation of Caesar's Camp, Heathrow, Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1944', *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society*, 59 (1993), 303–60.

The wooden figurines from Sequana's temple at the source of the Seine are presented in S. Deyts, *Les Bois sculptés des sources de la Seine* (XLII^{e} supplément à 'Gallia', Paris, 1983). A classic example of a ritual deposit of weapons in a bog is provided by Llyn Cerrig Bach: C. Fox, *A Find of the Early Iron Age from Llyn Cerrig Bach, Anglesey* (Cardiff, 1946).

Evidence for human sacrifice is presented in M. Aldhouse-Green, *Dying for the Gods: Human Sacrifice in Iron Age and Roman Europe* (Stroud, 2002). For a specific bog burial, see I. M. Stead, J. B. Bourke, and D. Brothwell (eds.), *Lindow Man: The Body in the Bog* (London, 1986). The question of headhunting and the sanctuaries of southern France are explored in I. Armit, *Headhunting and the Body in Iron Age Europe* (Cambridge, 2012).

Chapter 12 The Developed Celtic World

A brief introduction to the complex interactions between the Roman world and the Celtic north is provided in B. Cunliffe, *Greeks, Romans and Barbarians: Spheres of Interaction* (London, 1988). The importance of wine in the developing trading systems is considered in detail in A. Tchernia, *Le Vin de l'Italie romaine: essai d'histoire économique d'après les amphores* (Rome, 1986) and F. Laubenheimer, *Le Temps des amphores en Gaule: vins, huiles et sauces* (Paris, 1990). The background to the early Romanization of southern Gaul is given in C. Ebel, *Transalpine Gaul: The Emergence of a Roman Province* (Leiden, 1976). The social changes in Gaulish society at this time are examined by D. Nash in 'Territory and State Formation in Central Gaul', in D. Greene, C. Haselgrove, and M. Spriggs (eds.), *Social Organization and Settlement*, ii (Oxford, 1978), 455–75. The transformations taking place in north-eastern Gaul are considered in detail in an important study, M. Fernández-Götz, *Identity and Power: The Transformation of Iron Age Societies in Northeast Gaul* (Amsterdam, 2014), while for north-western Gaul, see N. Roymans, *Tribal Societies in Northern Gaul: An Anthropological Perspective* (Amsterdam, 1990). For Britain there are many useful papers to be found in C. Haselgrove and T. Moore (eds.), *The Later Iron Age in Britain and Beyond* (Oxford, 2007).

The complex history of relations between Rome and the kingdom of Noricum are described by G. Alföldy in *Noricum* (London, 1974). The archaeology and protohistory of the Dacians is much less accessible, but brief treatments exist in: E. Condurachi and C. Daicoviciu, *Romania* (London, 1971); D. Berciu, *Daco-Romania* (Geneva, 1978); and K. Lockyear, 'The Late Iron Age Background to Roman Dacia', in W. S. Hanson and I. P. Haynes (eds.), *Roman Dacia*: *The Making of a Provincial Society* (Portsmouth, RI, 2004), 33–74. A more detailed study of economic interactions is to be found in I. Glodariu, *Dacian Trade with the Hellenistic and Roman World* (Oxford, 1976). For a very broad overview of the protohistory of east Europe, see M. B. Shchukin, *Rome and the Barbarians in Central and Eastern Europe: 1st Century B.C.–1st Century A.D.*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1989).

The study of *oppida* has inspired a considerable literature. A readable, simplified account is provided by F. Audouze and O. Buchsenschutz, *Towns, Villages and Countryside of Celtic Europe: From the Beginnings of the Second Millennium to the End of the First Century* BC (English edn., London, 1992). Other useful detailed studies include: J. Collis, *Oppida: Earliest Towns North of the Alps* (Sheffield, 1984); O.-H. Frey, 'Die Bedeutung der Gallia Cisalpina für die Entstehung der Oppida-Kultur', in O.-H. Frey and H. Roth (eds.), *Studien zu Siedlungsfragen der Latènezeit* (Marburg, 1984), 1–38; and O. Buchsenschutz, *Structures d'habitats et fortifications de l'âge du fer en France septentrionale* (Paris, 1984). Three edited volumes offer many relevant and useful papers allowing the debates to be followed: B. Cunliffe and T. Rowley (eds.), *Oppida: The Beginnings of Urbanisation in Barbarian Europe. Papers presented to a Conference at Oxford, October 1975* (Oxford, 1976); V. Guichard, S. Sievers, and O. H. Urban (eds.), *Les Processus d'urbanisation à l'âge du fer* (Glux-en-Glenne, 2000); and M. Fernández-Götz, H. Wendling, and K. Winger (eds.), *Paths to Complexity: Centralisation and Urbanisation in Iron Age Europe* (Oxford, 2014). To these should be added G. Woolf's important paper 'Rethinking the Oppida', *Oxford Journal of Archaeology*, 12 (1993), 223–34.

The most extensive excavation of an *oppidum* is that of Manching in southern Germany, published in a highly detailed multi-volume monograph series of which the first sets the scene: W. Krämer and F. Schubert, *Die Ausgrabungen in Manching 1955–1961: Einführung und Fundstellenübersicht*,, Die Ausgrabungen in Manching, 1 (Wiesbaden, 1970). The continuing programme of excavations at Manching is outlined in S. Sievers and H. Wendling, 'Manching—A Celtic Oppidum between Rescue Excavation and Research', in C. von Carnap-Bornheim (ed.), *Quo Vadis? Long-term Research Projects in European Archaeology. Conference held at Schleswig, Schloss Gottorf, October 26–28, 2011* (Schleswig, 2014), 207–21, while for a broad consideration of the results of the programme, see H. Wendling, 'Manching Reconsidered: New Perspectives on Settlement Dynamics and Urbanization in Iron Age Central Europe', *European Journal of Archaeology*, 16 (2013), 459–90. Another *oppidum* to receive much archaeological attention is Bibracte (Mont Beuvray) in eastern France. The most recent programme of excavation is conveniently summed up in L. Dhennequin, J.-P. Guillaumet, and M. Szabó (eds.), ‘L’Oppidum de Bibracte (Mont Beuvray, France): bilan de 10 années de recherches (1996–2005)’, *Acta Archaeologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, 59 (2008), 1–152. A detailed report on the fortifications of the site is given in O. Buchsenschutz, J.-P. Guillaumet, and I. Ralston, *Les Remparts de Bibracte: recherches récentes sur la Porte du Rebout et le tracé des fortifications* (Glux-en-Glenne, 1999). Other reports on aspects of the excavation are published in the same series by Centre archéologique européen du Mont Beuvray (Glux-en-Glenne, dép. Nièvre).

Finally, a number of excellent detailed papers on aspects of the prelude to urbanization are to be found in S. Sievers and M. Schönfelder (eds.), *Die Frage der Protourbanisation in der Eisenzeit = La Question de la proto-urbanisation à l’âge du fer* (Bonn, 2012).

Chapter 13 The Celts in Retreat

Many background histories exist dealing with the early stages of Roman contact and conquest. For Iberia: L. A. Curchin, *Roman Spain: Conquest and Assimilation* (London, 1991); S. J. Keay, *Roman Spain* (London, 1988); and J. de AlarcÁ£o, *Portugal Romano* (3rd edn., Lisbon, 1983). For Gaul: J. F. Drinkwater, *Roman Gaul: The Three Provinces, 58 BC–AD 260* (Beckenham, 1983); A. King, *Roman Gaul and Germany* (London, 1990); A. L. F. Rivet, *Gallia Narbonensis: Southern France in Roman Times* (London, 1988); and E. M. Wightman, *Gallia Belgica* (London, 1985). Caesar's conquest of Gaul is dealt with in fine critical detail by C. Goudineau in *César et la Gaule* (Paris, 1990); and the immediate aftermath is considered in G. Woolf, *Becoming Roman: The Origins of Provincial Civilization in Gaul* (Cambridge, 1998). For Britain: S. S. Frere, *Britannia: A History of Roman Britain* (3rd edn., London, 1978); M. Millett, *The Romanization of Britain: An Essay in Archaeological Interpretation* (Cambridge, 1990); and D. Mattingly, *An Imperial Possession: Britain in the Roman Empire, 54 BC–AD 409* (London, 2006). For the Rhine–Danube area: C. M. Wells, *The German Policy of Augustus: An Examination of the Archaeological Evidence* (Oxford, 1972); G. Alföldy, *Noricum* (London, 1974); and A. Mócsy, *Pannonia and Upper Moesia: A History of the Middle Danube Provinces of the Roman Empire* (London, 1974). Together these easily accessible studies provide a full background to the main events using both historical and archaeological sources. Each provides bibliographies introducing the huge specialist literature.

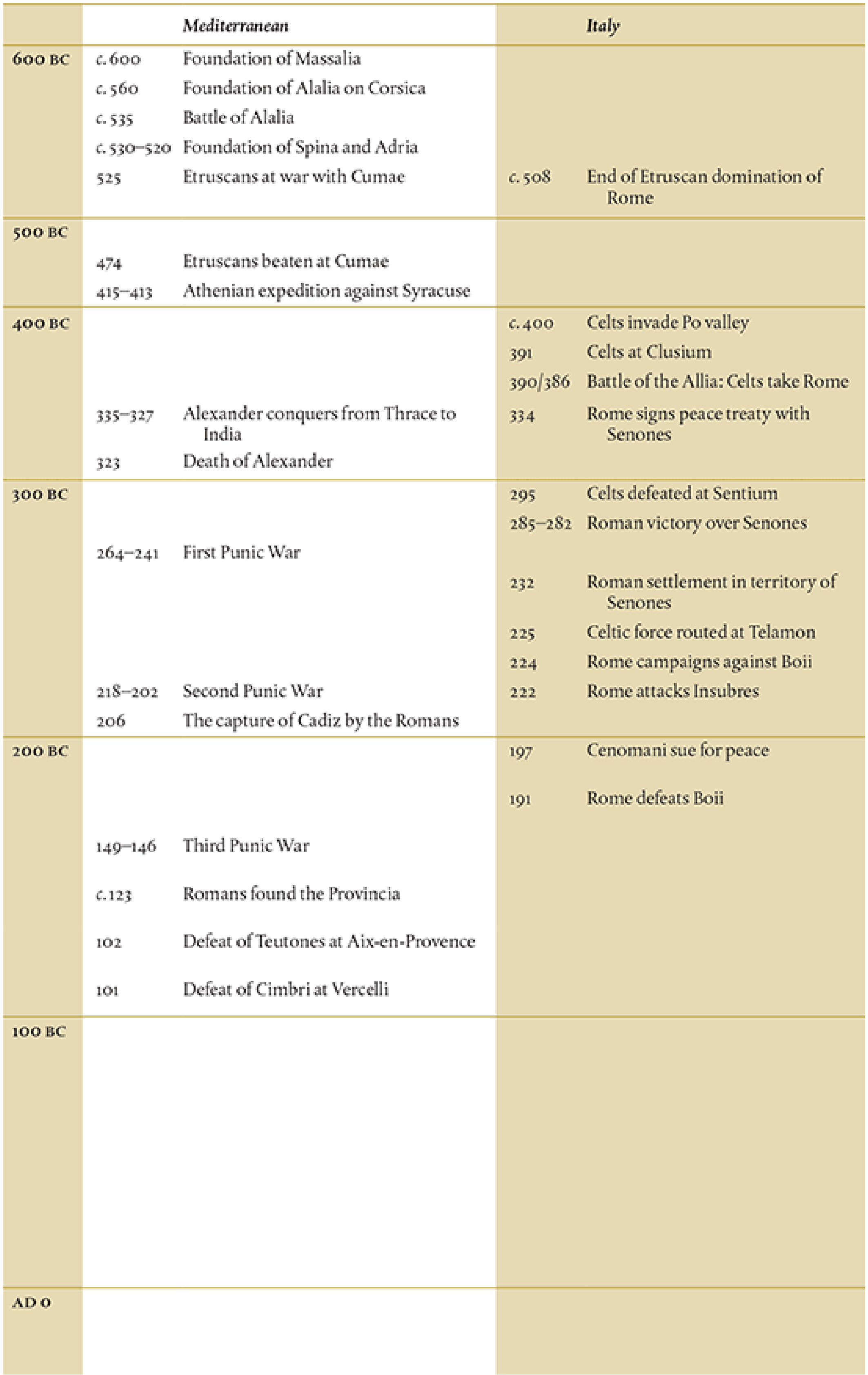
In addition to these broad overview studies there is a considerable volume of detailed literature. The ever-popular subject of the siege of Alesia was the subject of a major exhibition at the Musée des Antiquités nationales (now Musée d'archéologie nationale) in Paris in 1994, while the history of archaeology at Alesia, including the results of the most recent excavations, are attractively presented in M. Reddé, *Alésia* (Paris, 2003). The progress of the Roman army through Britain is considered in several of the early chapters in M. Todd (ed.), *A Companion to Roman Britain* (Oxford, 2004). The special case of Ireland and the changing Roman conception of it are carefully presented in P. Freeman, *Ireland and the Classical World* (Austin, Tex., 2001).

Chapter 14 Celtic Survival

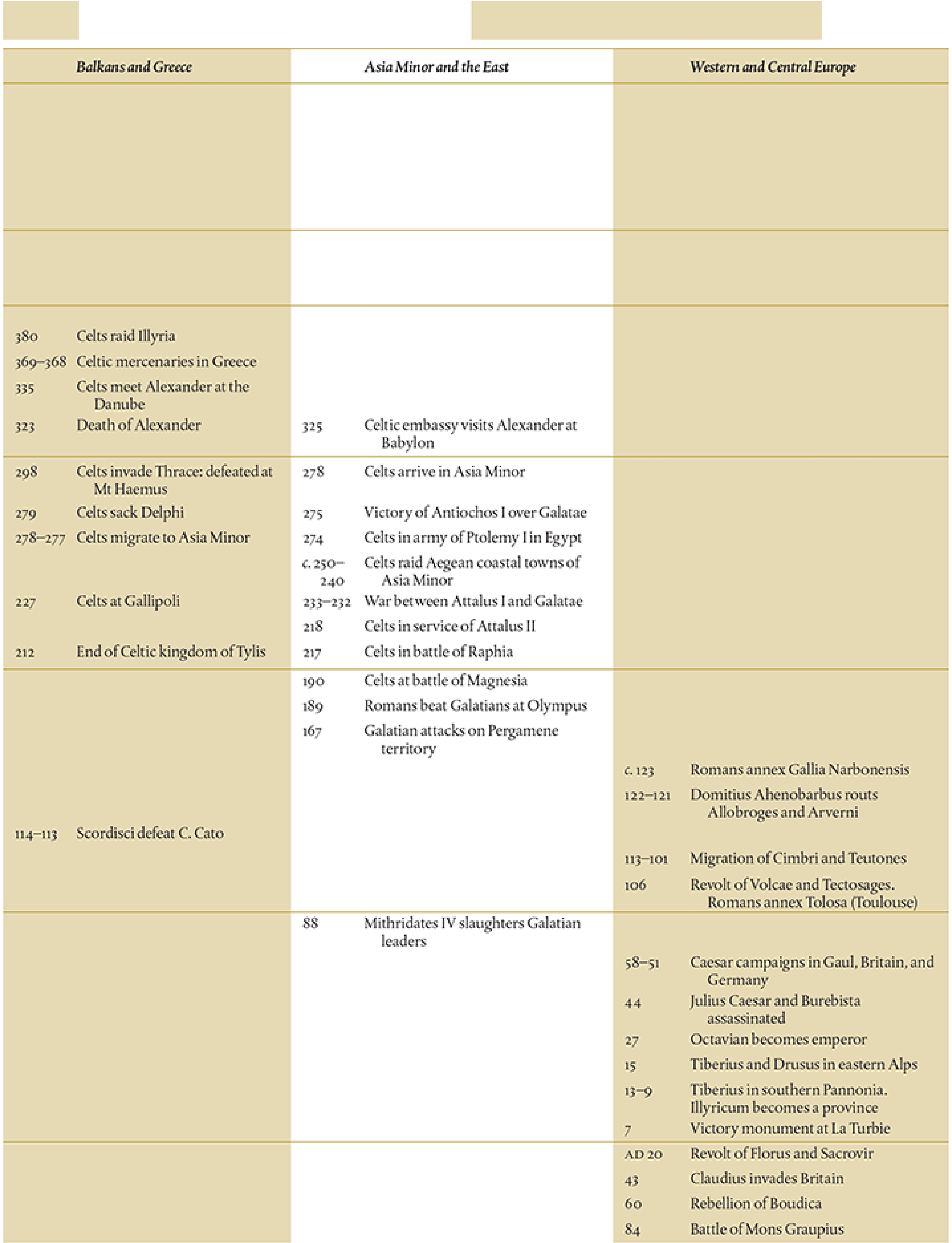
The classic general accounts of the survival of Celtic peoples and institutions in the west of Europe are: N. Chadwick, *The Celts* (Harmondsworth, 1970); M. Dillon and N. Chadwick, *The Celtic Realms* (London, 1967); and A. and B. Rees, *Celtic Heritage: Ancient Tradition in Ireland and Wales* (London, 1961). For the most part these works deal with Ireland, Wales, and Scotland. For Brittany the most accessible sources are: N. K. Chadwick, *Early Brittany* (Cardiff, 1969); L. Fleuriot, *Les Origines de la Bretagne* (Paris, 1980); F. Falc'hun, *Perspectives nouvelles sur l'histoire de la langue bretonne* (Paris, 1981); and A. Chédeville and H. Guillotel, *La Bretagne des saints et des rois V^e–X^e siècle* (Rennes, 1984). To these should be added: P.-R. Giot, P. Guigon, and B. Merdrignac, *The British Settlement of Brittany: The First Bretons in Armorica* (Stroud, 2003), which brings together a wide range of disparate evidence.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLES

Table 1 The history of the Celts and related events

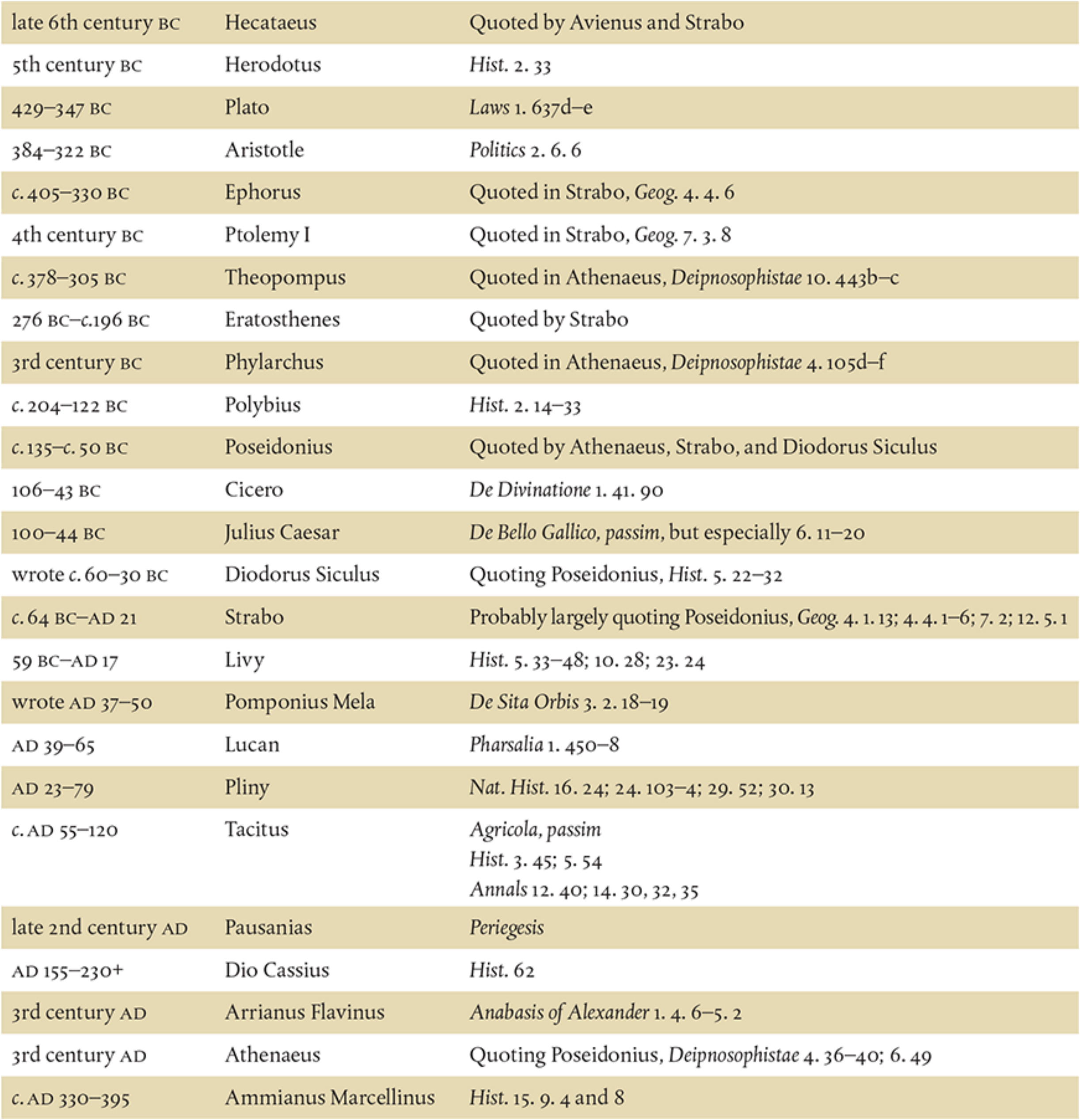


		Mediterranean		*Italy*
600 BC	*c.* 600	Foundation of Massalia		
	c. 560	Foundation of Alalia on Corsica		
	c. 535	Battle of Alalia		
	c. 530–520	Foundation of Spina and Adria		
	525	Etruscans at war with Cumae	*c.* 508	End of Etruscan domination of Rome
500 BC				
	474	Etruscans beaten at Cumae		
	415–413	Athenian expedition against Syracuse		
400 BC			*c.* 400	Celts invade Po valley
			391	Celts at Clusium
			390/386	Battle of the Allia: Celts take Rome
	335–327	Alexander conquers from Thrace to India	334	Rome signs peace treaty with Senones
	323	Death of Alexander		
300 BC			295	Celts defeated at Sentium
			285–282	Roman victory over Senones
	264–241	First Punic War		
			232	Roman settlement in territory of Senones
			225	Celtic force routed at Telamon
			224	Rome campaigns against Boii
	218–202	Second Punic War	222	Rome attacks Insubres
	206	The capture of Cadiz by the Romans		
200 BC			197	Cenomani sue for peace
			191	Rome defeats Boii
	149–146	Third Punic War		
	c. 123	Romans found the Provincia		
	102	Defeat of Teutones at Aix-en-Provence		
	101	Defeat of Cimbri at Vercelli		
100 BC				
AD 0				



	Balkans and Greece		*Asia Minor and the East*		*Western and Central Europe*
380	Celts raid Illyria				
369–368	Celtic mercenaries in Greece				
335	Celts meet Alexander at the Danube				
323	Death of Alexander	325	Celtic embassy visits Alexander at Babylon		
298	Celts invade Thrace: defeated at Mt Haemus	278	Celts arrive in Asia Minor		
279	Celts sack Delphi	275	Victory of Antiochos I over Galatae		
278–277	Celts migrate to Asia Minor	274	Celts in army of Ptolemy I in Egypt		
		c. 250–240	Celts raid Aegean coastal towns of Asia Minor		
227	Celts at Gallipoli	233–232	War between Attalus I and Galatae		
		218	Celts in service of Attalus II		
212	End of Celtic kingdom of Tylis	217	Celts in battle of Raphia		
		190	Celts at battle of Magnesia		
		189	Romans beat Galatians at Olympus		
		167	Galatian attacks on Pergamene territory		
				c. 123	Romans annex Gallia Narbonensis
				122–121	Domitius Ahenobarbus routs Allobroges and Arverni
114–113	Scordisci defeat C. Cato				
				113–101	Migration of Cimbri and Teutones
				106	Revolt of Volcae and Tectosages. Romans annex Tolosa (Toulouse)
		88	Mithridates IV slaughters Galatian leaders		
				58–51	Caesar campaigns in Gaul, Britain, and Germany
				44	Julius Caesar and Burebista assassinated
				27	Octavian becomes emperor
				15	Tiberius and Drusus in eastern Alps
				13–9	Tiberius in southern Pannonia. Illyricum becomes a province
				7	Victory monument at La Turbie
				AD 20	Revolt of Florus and Sacrovir
				43	Claudius invades Britain
				60	Rebellion of Boudica
				84	Battle of Mons Graupius

Table 2 Principal classical sources writing about the Celts

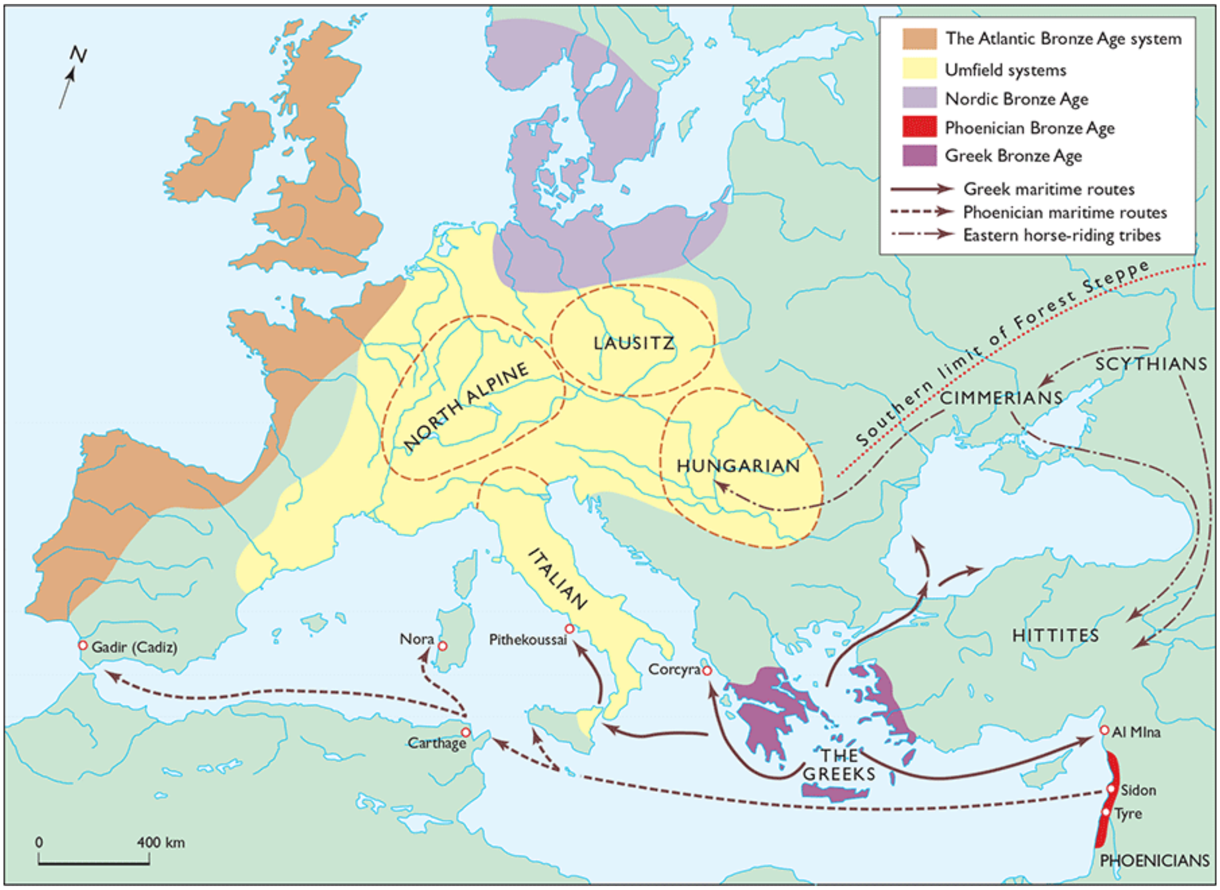


late 6th century BC	Hecataeus	Quoted by Avienus and Strabo
5th century BC	Herodotus	*Hist.* 2. 33
429–347 BC	Plato	*Laws* 1. 637d–e
384–322 BC	Aristotle	*Politics* 2. 6. 6
c. 405–330 BC	Ephorus	Quoted in Strabo, *Geog.* 4. 4. 6
4th century BC	Ptolemy I	Quoted in Strabo, *Geog.* 7. 3. 8
c. 378–305 BC	Theopompus	Quoted in Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae* 10. 443b–c
276 BC–*c.*196 BC	Eratosthenes	Quoted by Strabo
3rd century BC	Phylarchus	Quoted in Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae* 4. 105d–f
c. 204–122 BC	Polybius	*Hist.* 2. 14–33
c. 135–*c.* 50 BC	Poseidonius	Quoted by Athenaeus, Strabo, and Diodorus Siculus
106–43 BC	Cicero	*De Divinatione* 1. 41. 90
100–44 BC	Julius Caesar	*De Bello Gallico, passim,* but especially 6. 11–20
wrote *c.* 60–30 BC	Diodorus Siculus	Quoting Poseidonius, *Hist.* 5. 22–32
c. 64 BC–AD 21	Strabo	Probably largely quoting Poseidonius, *Geog.* 4. 1. 13; 4. 4. 1–6; 7. 2; 12. 5. 1
59 BC–AD 17	Livy	*Hist.* 5. 33–48; 10. 28; 23. 24
wrote AD 37–50	Pomponius Mela	*De Sita Orbis* 3. 2. 18–19
AD 39–65	Lucan	*Pharsalia* 1. 450–8
AD 23–79	Pliny	*Nat. Hist.* 16. 24; 24. 103–4; 29. 52; 30. 13
c. AD 55–120	Tacitus	*Agricola, passim* *Hist.* 3. 45; 5. 54 *Annals* 12. 40; 14. 30, 32, 35
late 2nd century AD	Pausanias	*Periegesis*
AD 155–230+	Dio Cassius	*Hist.* 62
3rd century AD	Arrianus Flavinus	*Anabasis of Alexander* 1. 4. 6–5. 2
3rd century AD	Athenaeus	Quoting Poseidonius, *Deipnosophistae* 4. 36–40; 6. 49
c. AD 330–395	Ammianus Marcellinus	*Hist.* 15. 9. 4 and 8

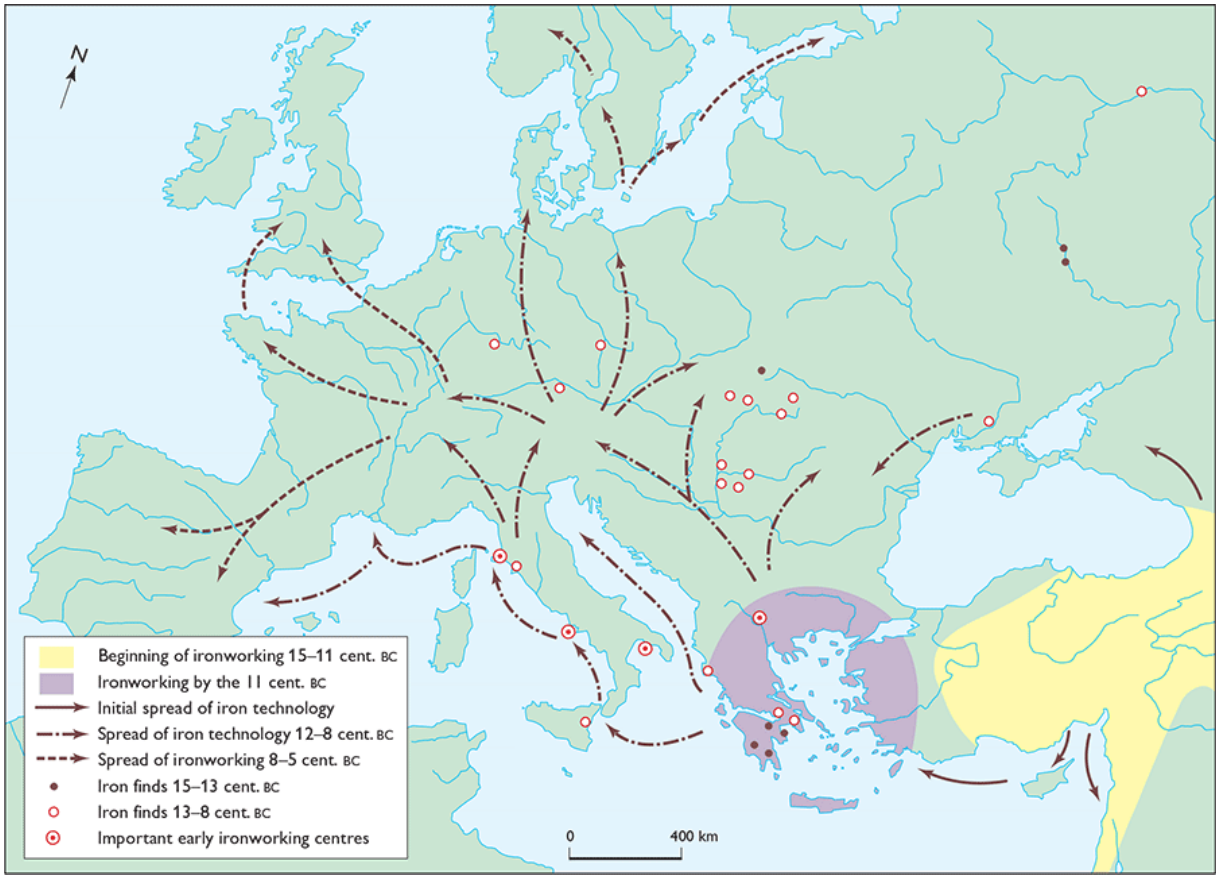
Table 3 A concordance of frequently used archaeological terminology in western and central Europe, 1300 BC to the Roman era

		Central Europe	*Switzerland*	*North France*	*Britain*	*Art Styles*
	Roman	D3	La Tène III	Roman	Roman	Late Strict Style
0					Late Iron Age	
	La Tène			Final La Tène		
100		D2				
		La Tène D1				
		C2	IIb	Middle La Tène	Middle Iron Age	
200						Plastic Style and Sword Style
		La Tène C1	La Tène IIa			
		B2	Ic	III		
300						Vegetal Style
		La Tène B1	Ib	II		
					Early Iron Age	
400		La Tène A	La Tène Ia	Early La Tène I		Early Strict Style
	Hallstatt	D3	Hallstatt II	IIb		
500		D2		Hallstatt IIa		
		Hallstatt D1		Hallstatt I		
600					Earliest Iron Age/ Llyn Fawr	
700		C2 C1	Hallstatt I			
		Hallstatt Co				
800	Urnfield period (Late Bronze Age)	B3 / B2			Ewart Park/ Blackmore	
900		Hallstatt B1			mature Ewart Park	
1000		A2			Wilburton	
1100		Hallstatt A1				
					Penard	
1200		Bronze D				
1300						

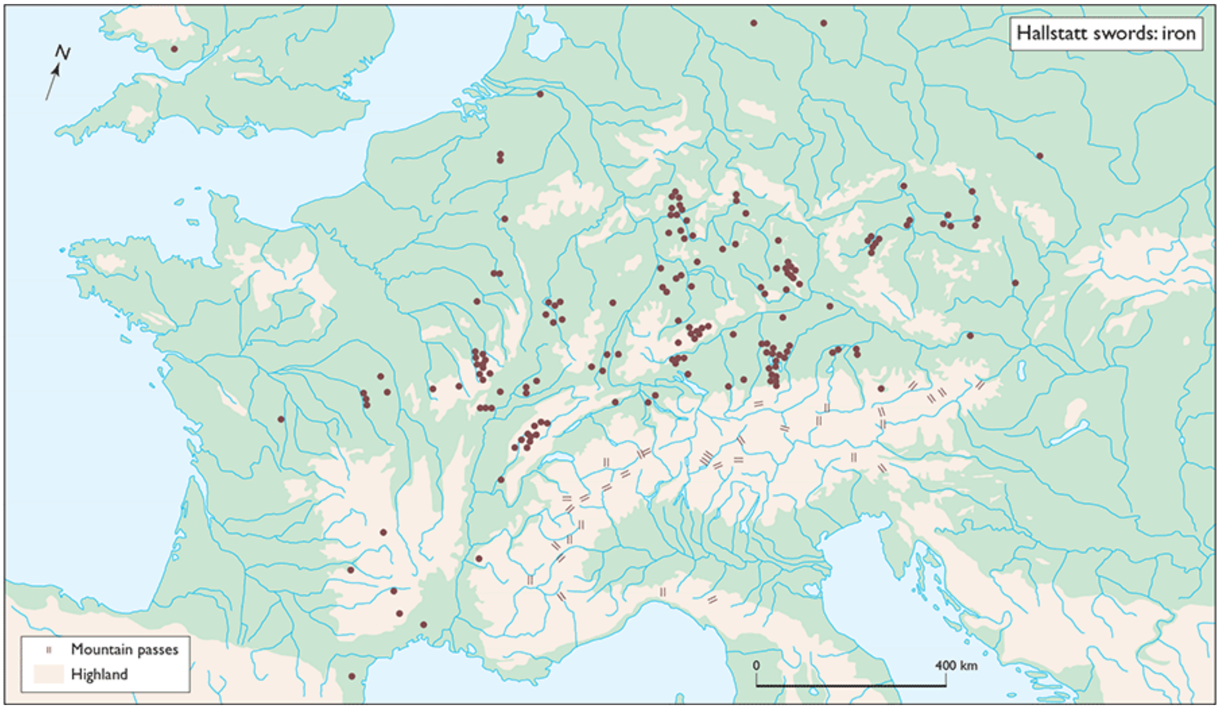
MAP SECTION

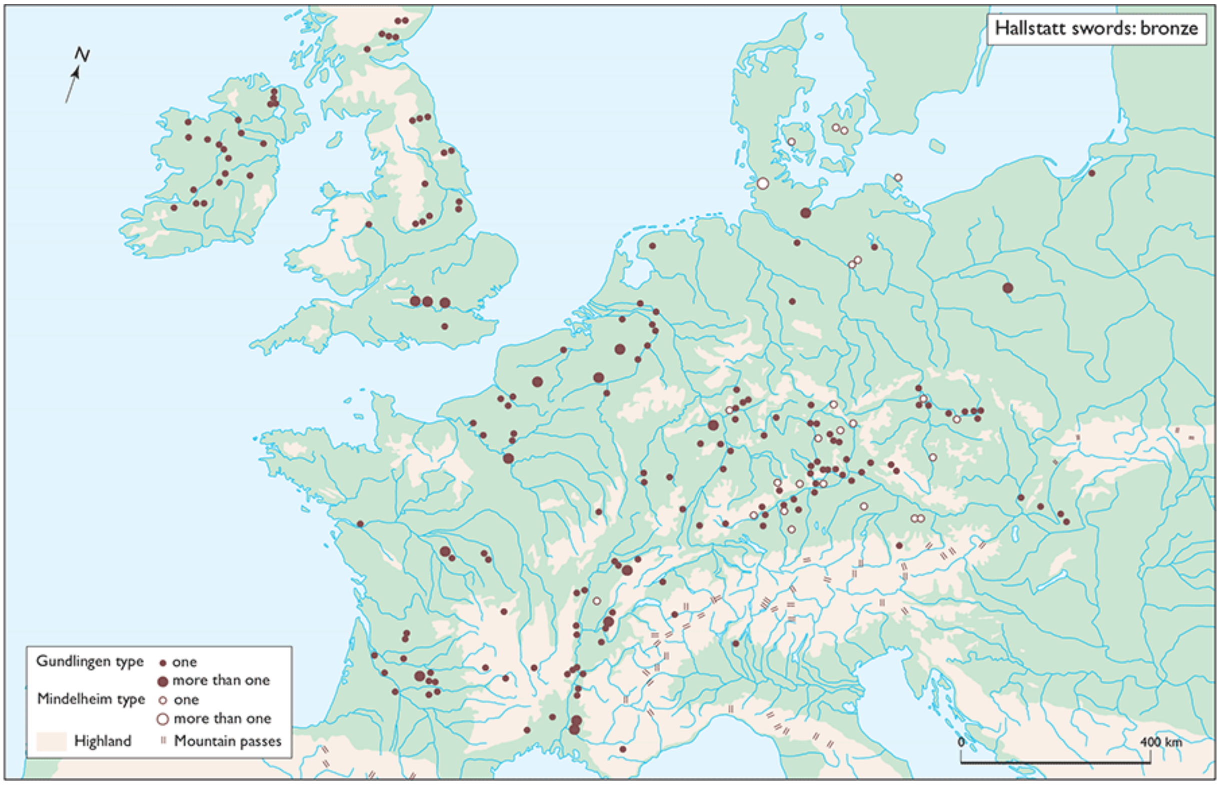

N
The Atlantic Bronze Age system
Umfield systems
Nordic Bronze Age
Phoenician Bronze Age
Greek Bronze Age
Greek maritime routes
Phoenician maritime routes
Eastern horse-riding tribes
Southern limit of Forest Steppe
SCYTHIANS
CIMMERIANS
LAUSITZ
NORTH ALPINE
HUNGARIAN
ITALIAN
HITTITES
Gadir (Cadiz)
Nora
Pithekoussai
Corcyra
Carthage
THE GREEKS
Al Mina
Sidon
Tyre
PHOENICIANS
0
400 km

1 Europe, 1300–700 BC. The period that followed the breakdown of the Mycenaean–Minoan culture of the Aegean was a time of massive social and economic reformations in Europe. In the Mediterranean, Greek and Phoenician city-states emerged and extended their influence through colonies and ports-of-trade into the western Mediterranean and the Black Sea. In the region of the Pontic steppe large-scale folk movements displaced segments of population, some of whom moved into Asia Minor to be used as mercenaries in conflicts between the Assyrians and the kingdom of Urartu. On the European peninsula three distinct cultural systems emerged: Atlantic, Nordic, and Urnfield. Copper and tin were extensively mined to make bronze, which was traded over long distances. Within the Urnfield zone several distinct cultural groupings can be recognized. It was within the Atlantic zone that the Celtic language probably emerged.

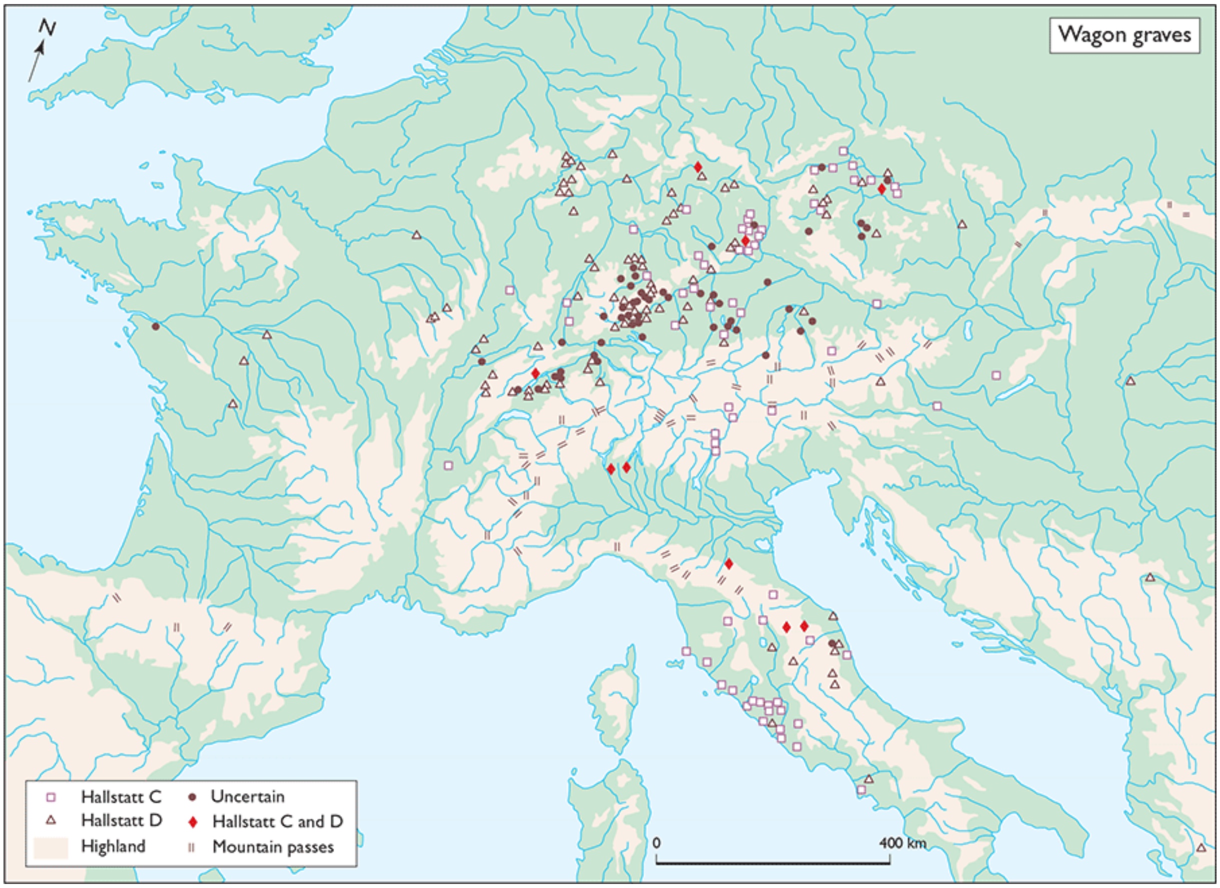

N
Beginning of ironworking 15–11 cent. BC
Ironworking by the 11 cent. BC
Initial spread of iron technology
Spread of iron technology 12–8 cent. BC
Spread of ironworking 8–5 cent. BC
Iron finds 15–13 cent. BC
Iron finds 13–8 cent. BC
Important early ironworking centres
0
400 km

2 The spread of iron. The extraction of iron began in Asia Minor around the middle of the second millennium BC and was, for a long while, a closely guarded secret. A few finished objects were distributed beyond this early production zone, but it was not until the breakdown of the Hittite empire in the twelfth century BC that the knowledge of ironworking spread, first to the Aegean region and from there to the rest of Europe. By the eighth century iron was being extensively worked in Etruria, and iron objects are sufficiently common in graves in eastern Hungary to suggest that ironworking may have been in operation there. The latter part of the eighth century saw the spread of the technology to most of the rest of Europe.

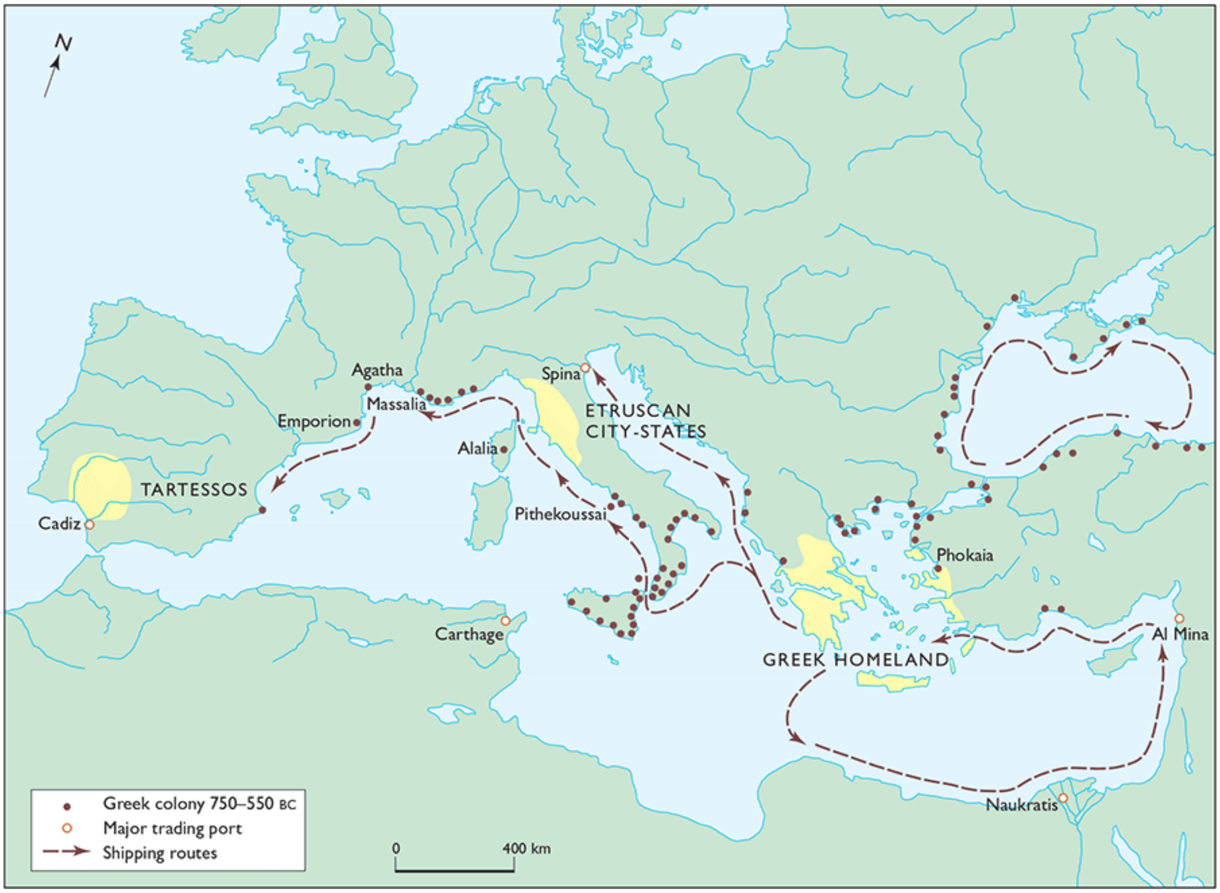

Hallstatt swords: iron
N
Mountain passes
Highland
0
400 km


Hallstatt swords: bronze
N
Gundlingen type ● one
● more than one
Mindelheim type ○ one
○ more than one
Highland
Mountain passes
0
400 km

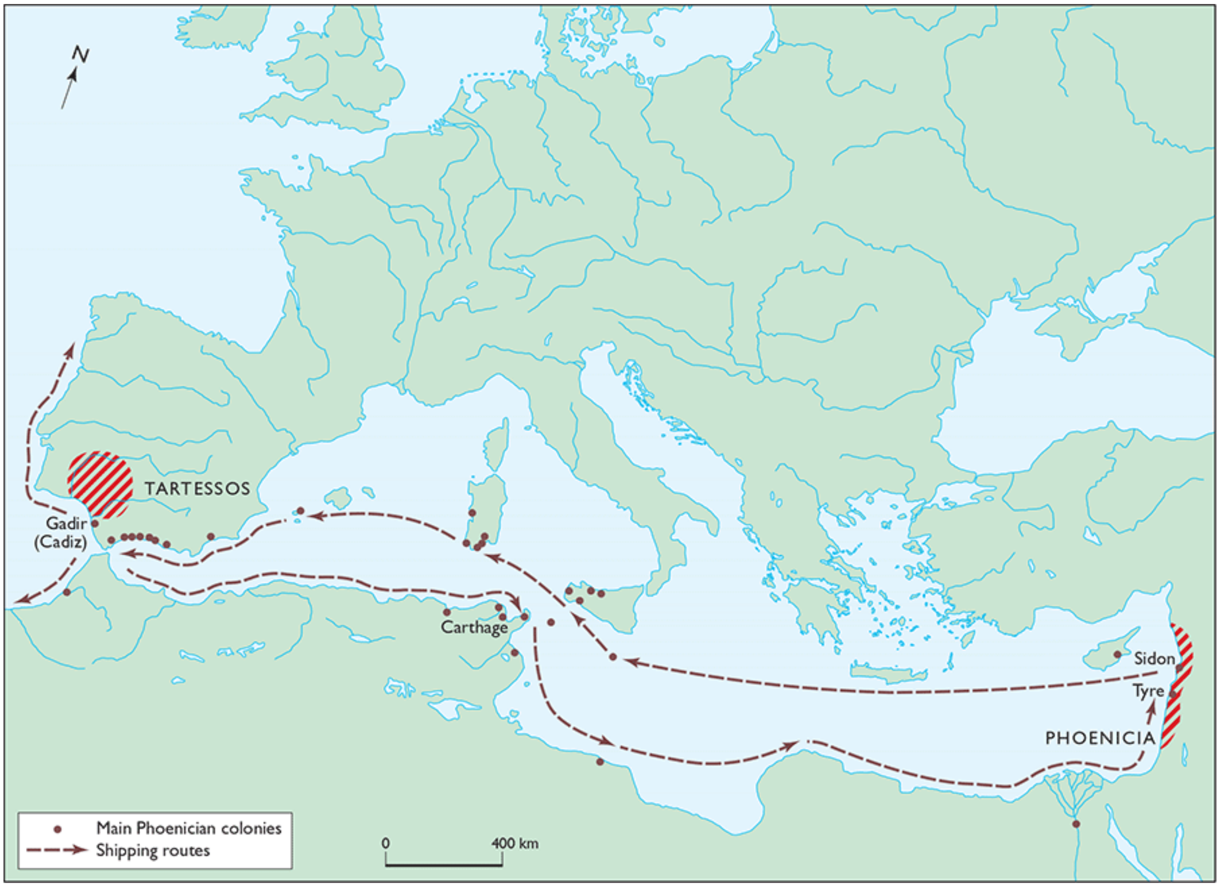
3 &4 The distribution of long swords of iron and bronze in the seventh century BC. The Hallstatt C long sword evolved in middle Europe as the culmination of a lengthy tradition of manufacturing. The most common type was the bronze Gundlingen sword, which was widely distributed and formed the model for local schools of swordsmiths to copy. The more elaborate bronze Mindelheim type had a more restricted distribution. Iron versions of the Hallstatt C sword developed in the late eighth and seventh centuries in this core region but spread quite widely through exchange. Possession of a sword was a symbol of warrior status.



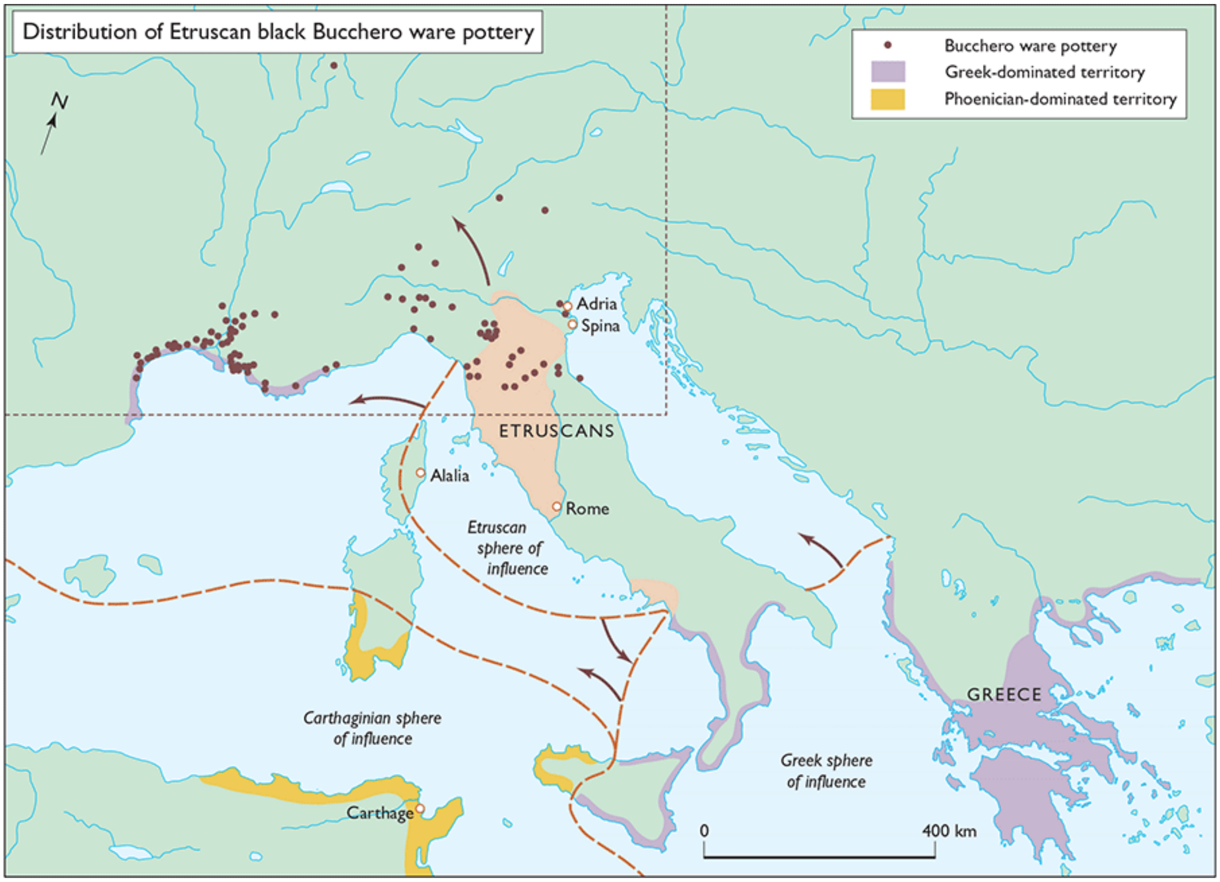
5 Wagon graves of the seventh and sixth centuries BC In the Hallstatt C and D periods the elite of the middle European zone adopted the burial wagon as a symbol of status. The dead person was taken to the grave on a funerary vehicle which was buried with him or her, usually in a timber-lined pit beneath a barrow. The earliest burials of this kind occur in a comparatively restricted zone extending from southern Germany to Bohemia. The idea of the funerary cart goes back to the beginning of the Late Bronze Age in the area, but influences from the east or from the Etruscan region may have encouraged the development of the fashion. In the Hallstatt D period the centre of the elite zone moved west and the concept of vehicle burial was more widely adopted.


N
Agatha
Massalia
Emporion
Alalia
TARTESSOS
Cadiz
Spina
ETRUSCAN CITY-STATES
Pithekoussai
Carthage
GREEK HOMELAND
Phokaia
Al Mina
Naukratis
● Greek colony 750–550 BC
○ Major trading port
Shipping routes
0
400 km

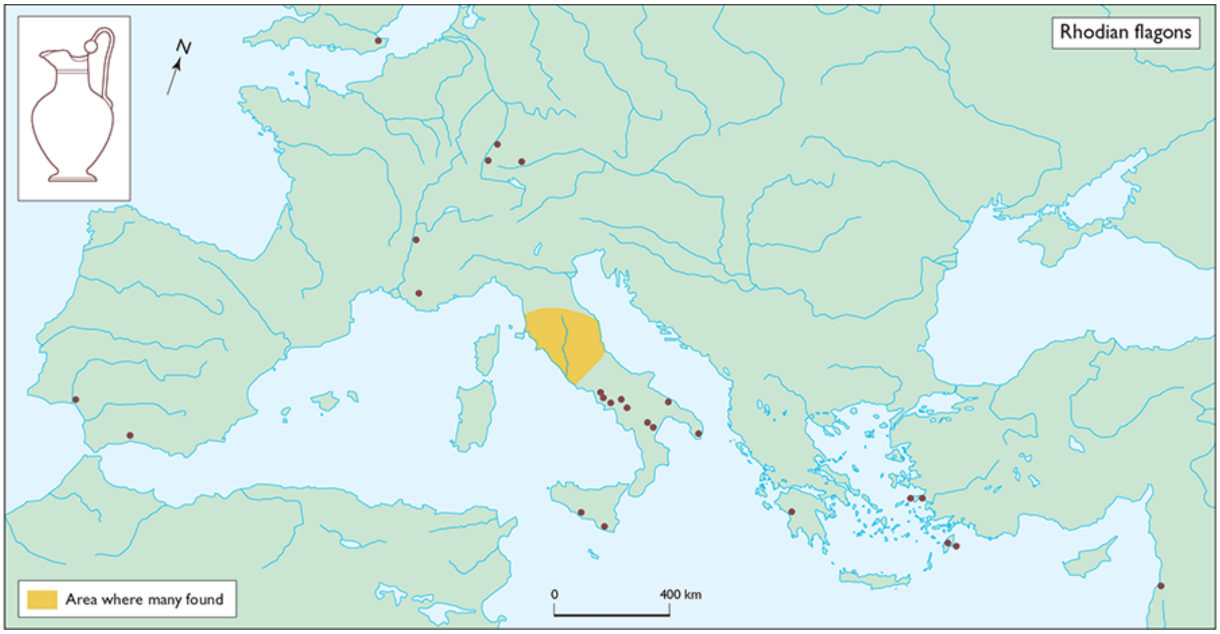
6 Greeks in the Mediterranean. In the two centuries from 750 to 550 BC large numbers of settlements were established by the Greek city-states around the shores of the Black Sea and Mediterranean. In the eastern Mediterranean the shipping lanes probably circled the sea, passing along the north African coast, but in the central and western Mediterranean shipping was, for the most part, restricted to the northern coastal waters.


N
TARTESSOS
Gadir
(Cadiz)
Carthage
Sidon
Tyre
PHOENICIA
Main Phoenician colonies
Shipping routes
0
400 km

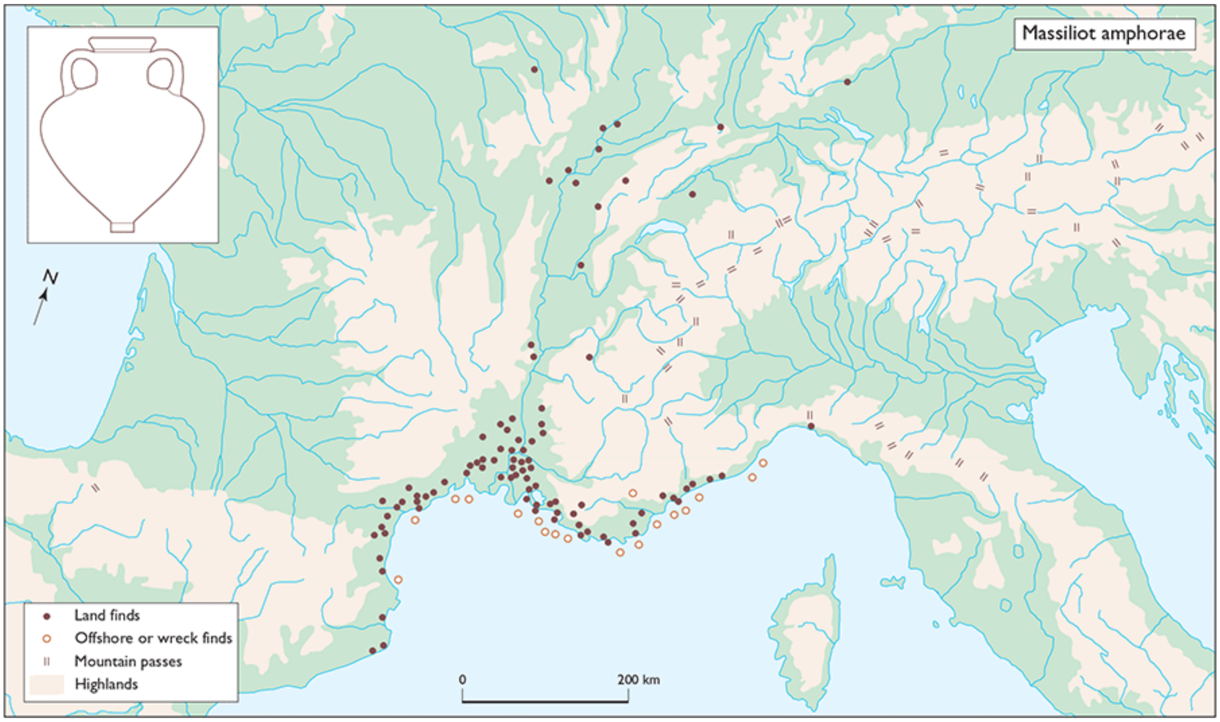
7 Phoenicians in the Mediterranean. The Phoenicians travelled widely throughout the Mediterranean. Traditionally they had established themselves on the Atlantic island of Gadir (Cadiz) by 1200 BC but there is no firm archaeological evidence of this. It was in the late tenth and early ninth centuries that their activities in the western Mediterranean intensified. One of the prime attractions was silver mined in the kingdom of Tartessos in south-western Iberia. The extension of Greek interest into the western Mediterranean in the sixth century began to create tensions which finally erupted into the First Punic War (264–241).


Distribution of Etruscan black Bucchero ware pottery
N
● Bucchero ware pottery
Greek-dominated territory
Phoenician-dominated territory
Adria
Spina
ETRUSCANS
Alalia
Rome
Etruscan sphere of influence
Carthaginian sphere of influence
Carthage
Greek sphere of influence
GREECE
0
400 km

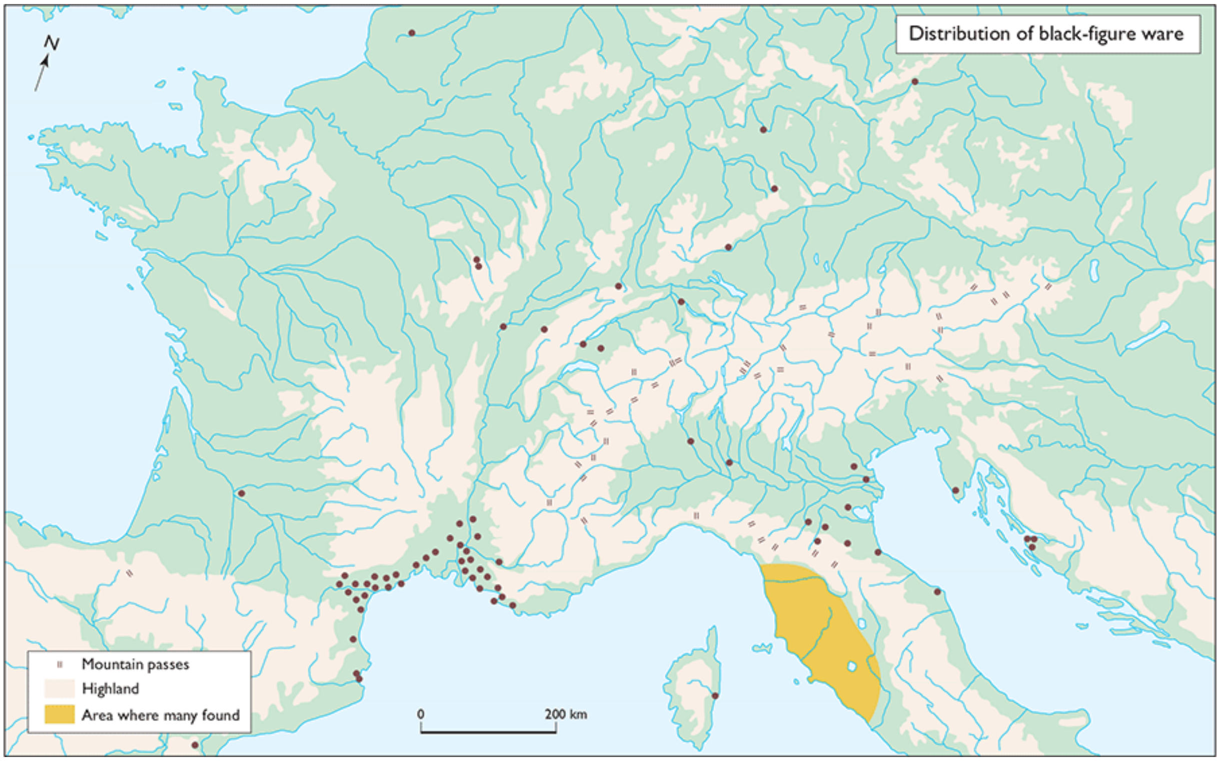
8 Etruscans in the Mediterranean. The Etruscan coastal cities were heavily involved in trade in the north-western Mediterranean, as the distribution of their characteristic black Bucchero pottery indicates. The development of Greek interests around the shores of southern France began to conflict with Etruscan commercial interests, particularly after c.540 BC. Etruscan attempts to develop a sphere of interest in southern Italy were rapidly halted by the growing power of the cities of Magna Graecia. Partly as a result of these constraints the Etruscans began to extend through the Apennines into the Po valley.

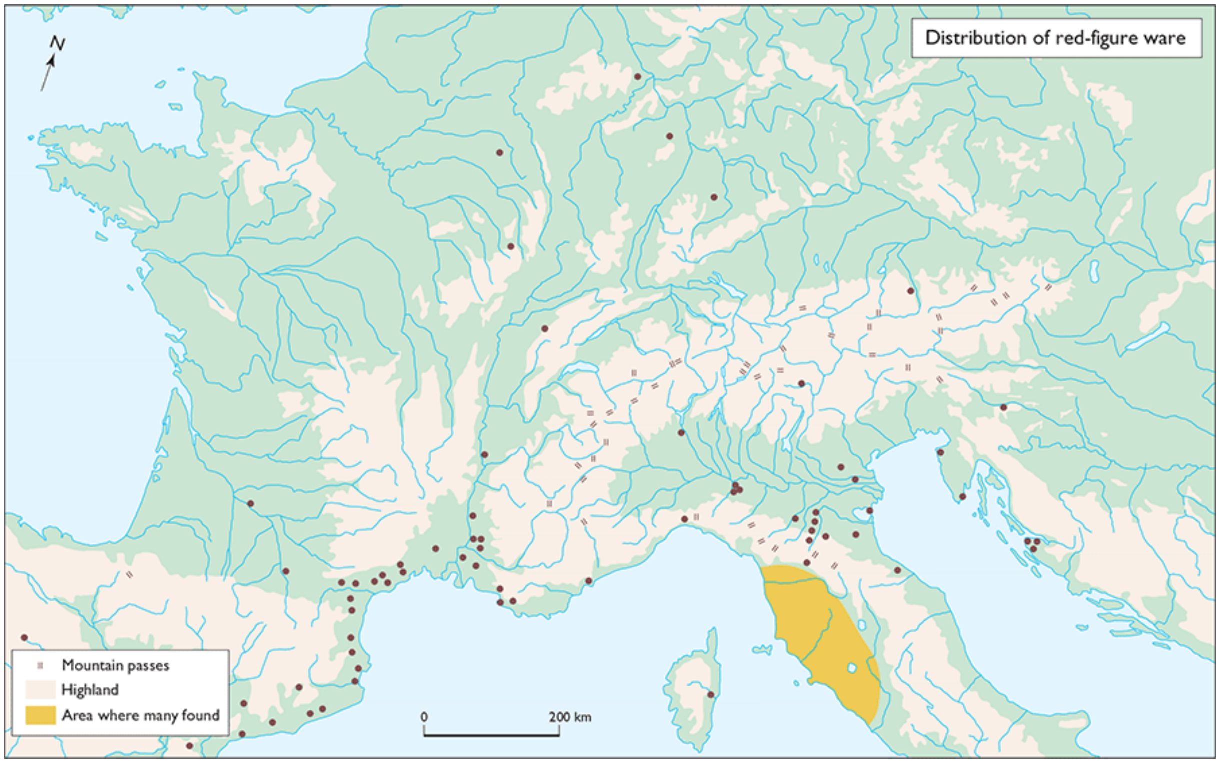

Rhodian flagons
N
Area where many found
0
400 km

9 Rhodian flagons. Rhodian flagons, which were probably made in Greek workshops in southern Italy, were used for pouring wine. In the first half of the sixth century BC a number of them were used, possibly as gifts, in the trading relationships that were beginning to develop between the western Greek colonies and native communities in southern Spain and west central Europe.

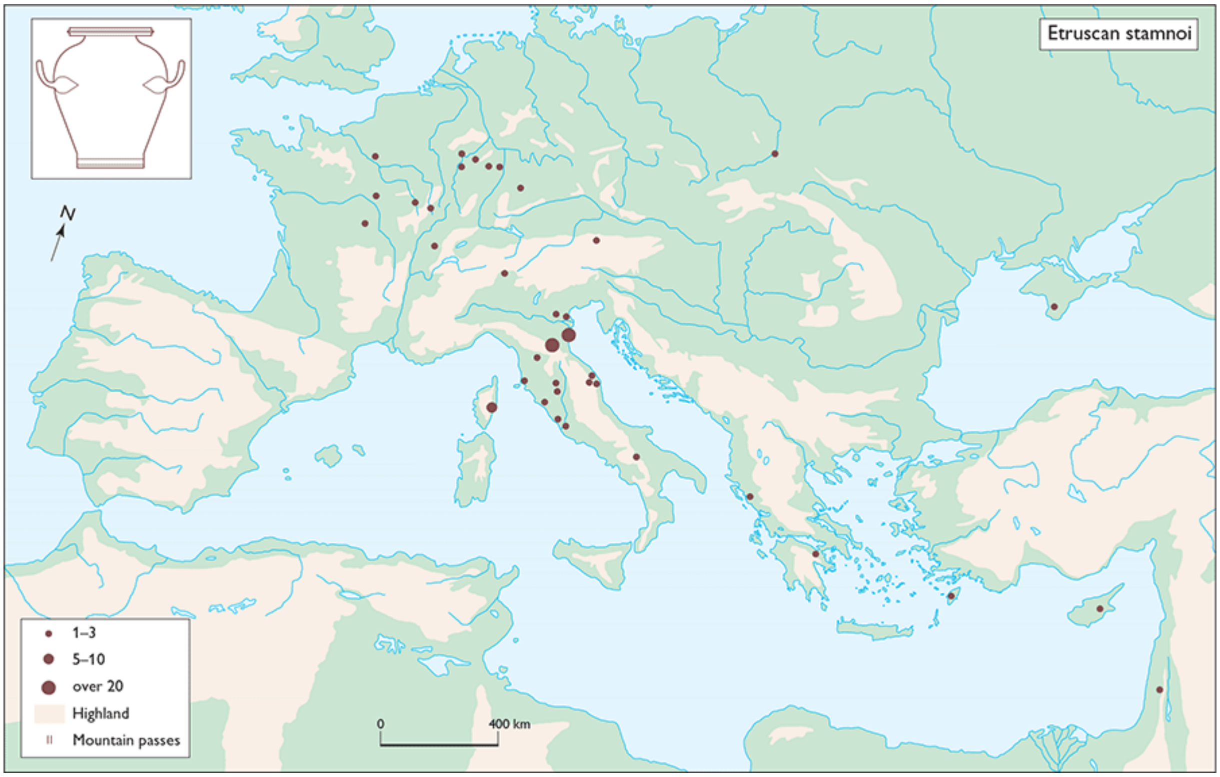

Massiliot amphorae
N
● Land finds
○ Offshore or wreck finds
ıı Mountain passes
Highlands
0
200 km

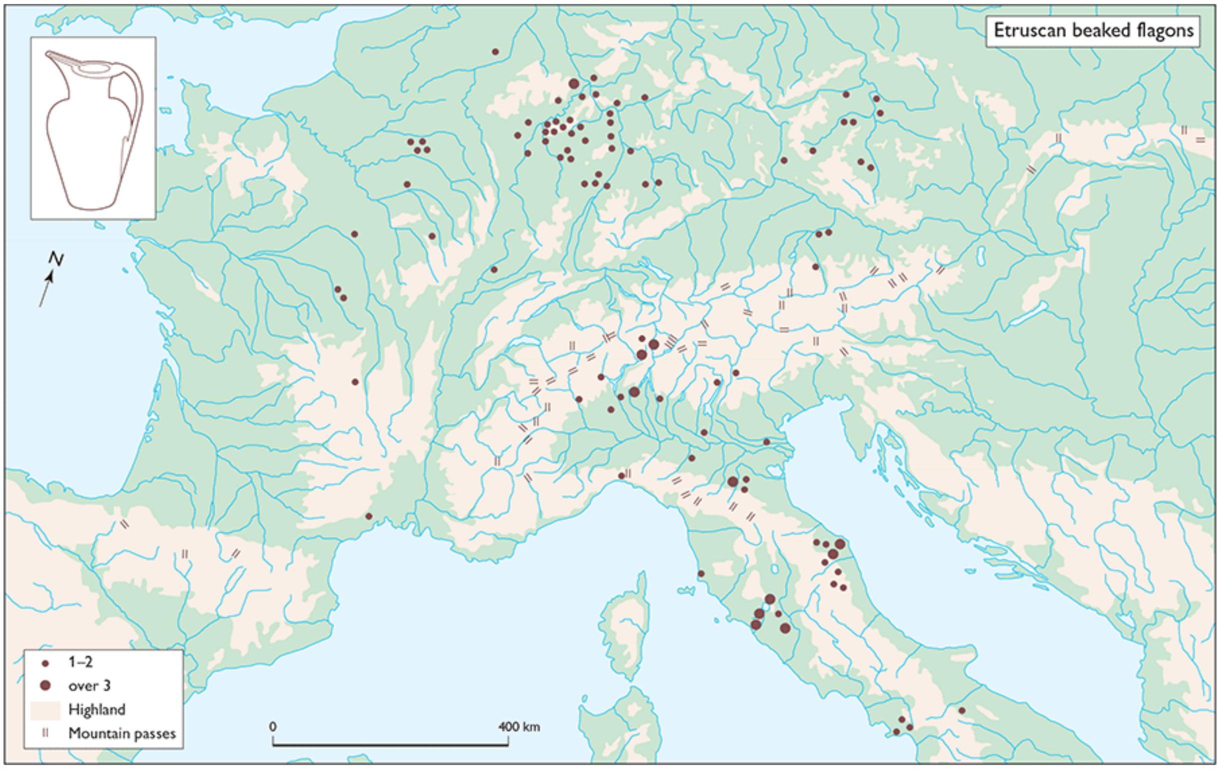
10 Massiliot wine amphorae. Wine manufactured in the Greek coastal zone of southern France was transported in distinctive amphorae. The distribution of sherds of sixth-century BC amphorae in west central Europe indicates the zone receiving wine as a luxury product.


Distribution of black-figure ware
N
Mountain passes
Highland
Area where many found
0
200 km

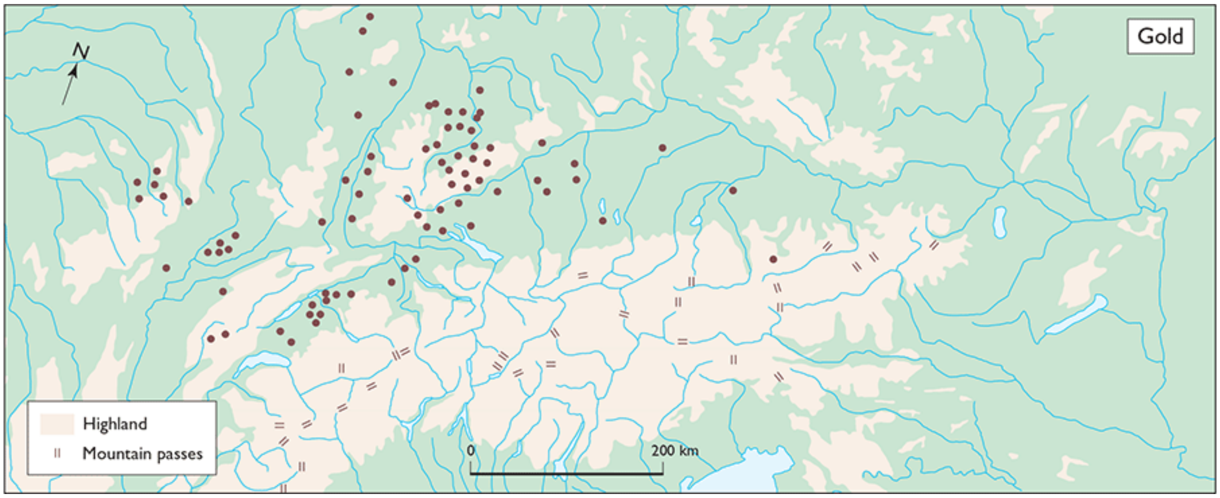

Distribution of red-figure ware
N
Mountain passes
Highland
Area where many found
0
200 km

11 & 12 Attic black- and red-figure pottery. Greek pottery was traded extensively in the western Mediterranean. The two more distinctive types are the Attic black- and red-figure wares. Black-figure wares date broadly to the latter part of the sixth century BC, while red-figure wares were common in the fifth century. Their distribution in west central Europe reflects the 'chieftain' zone.

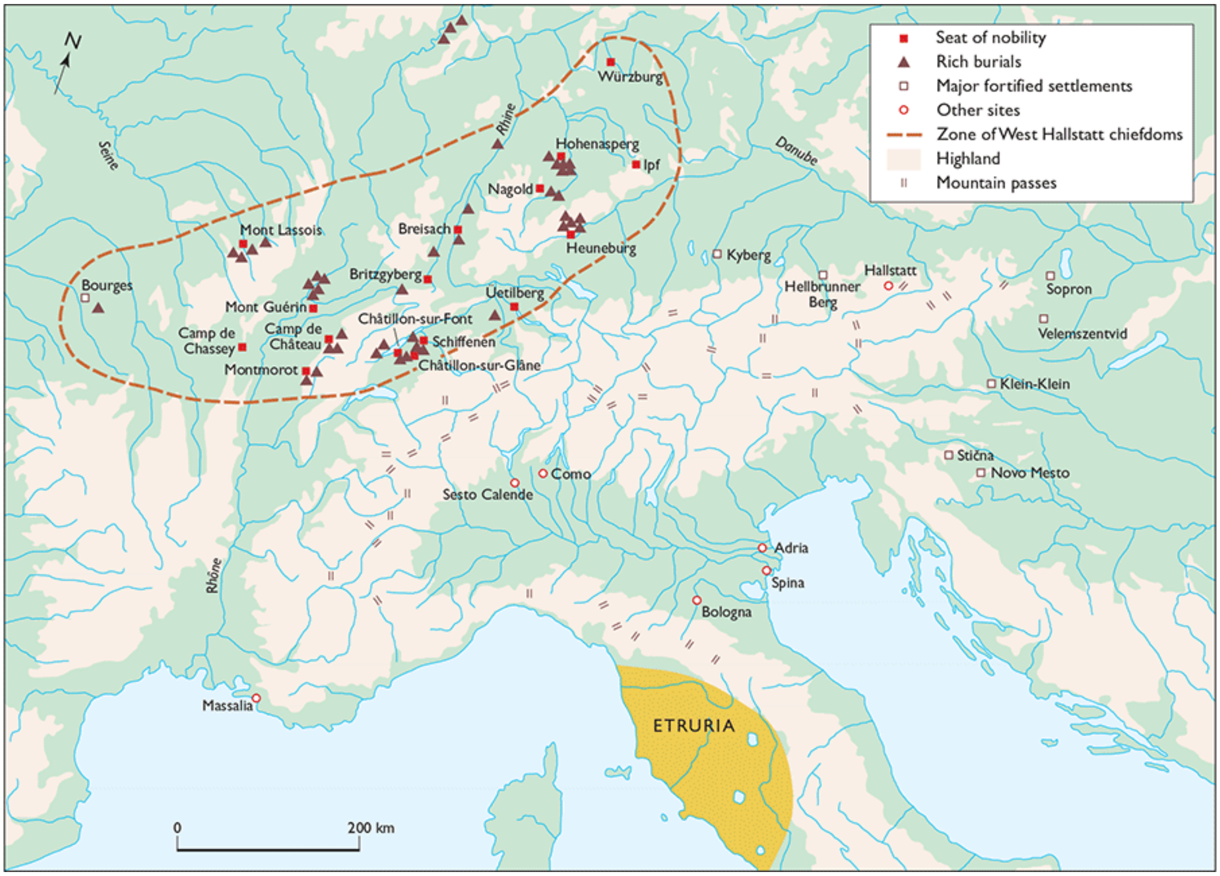

Etruscan stamnoi
N
1–3
5–10
over 20
Highland
Mountain passes
0
400 km


Etruscan beaked flagons
N
1–2
over 3
Highland
Mountain passes
0
400 km

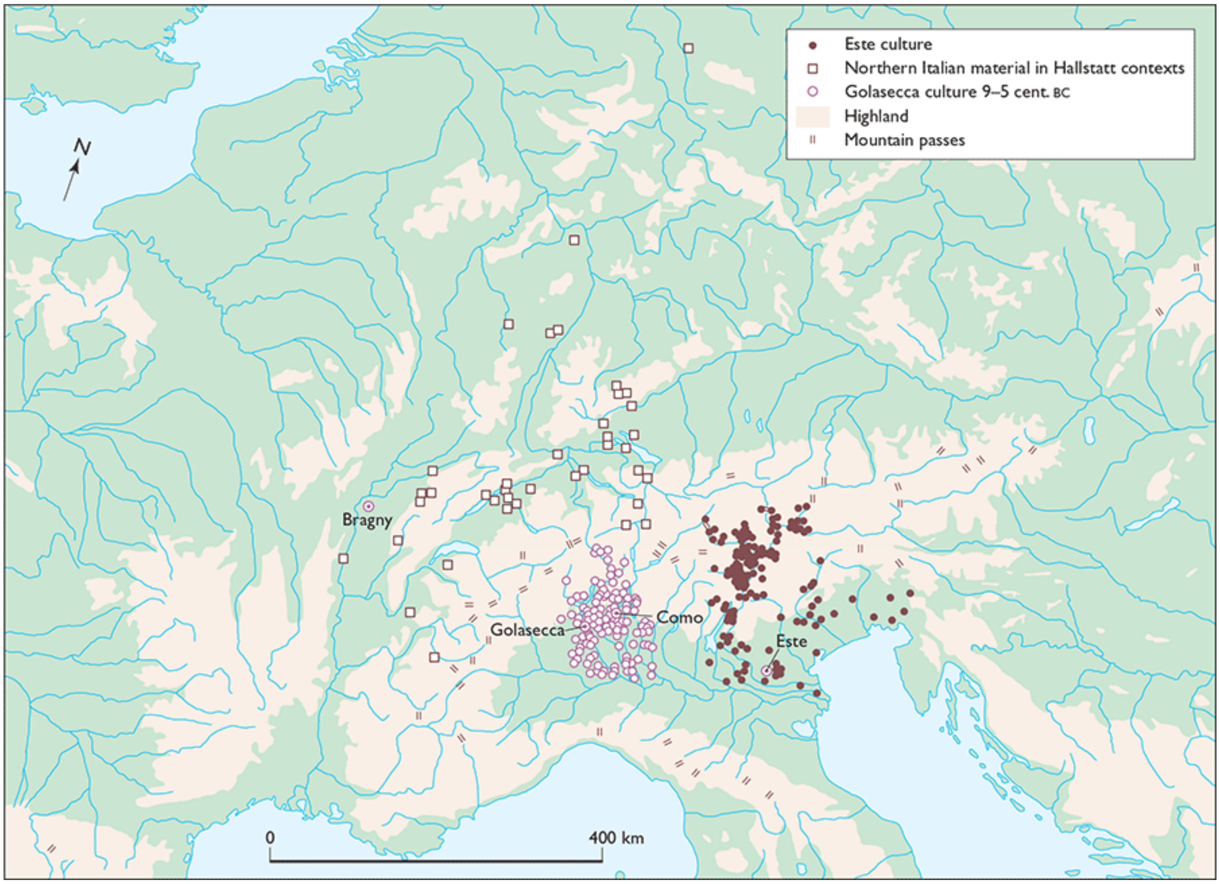
13 & 14 Etruscan bronze stamnoi and beaked flagons. Two distinctive Etruscan products are the bronze beaked flagon and the stamnos. Both were traded into west central Europe and are found in aristocratic burials mostly dating to the Early La Tène period. The great concentration in the Rhine–Moselle area suggests that the Etruscans had established a special relationship with the elite of this region.



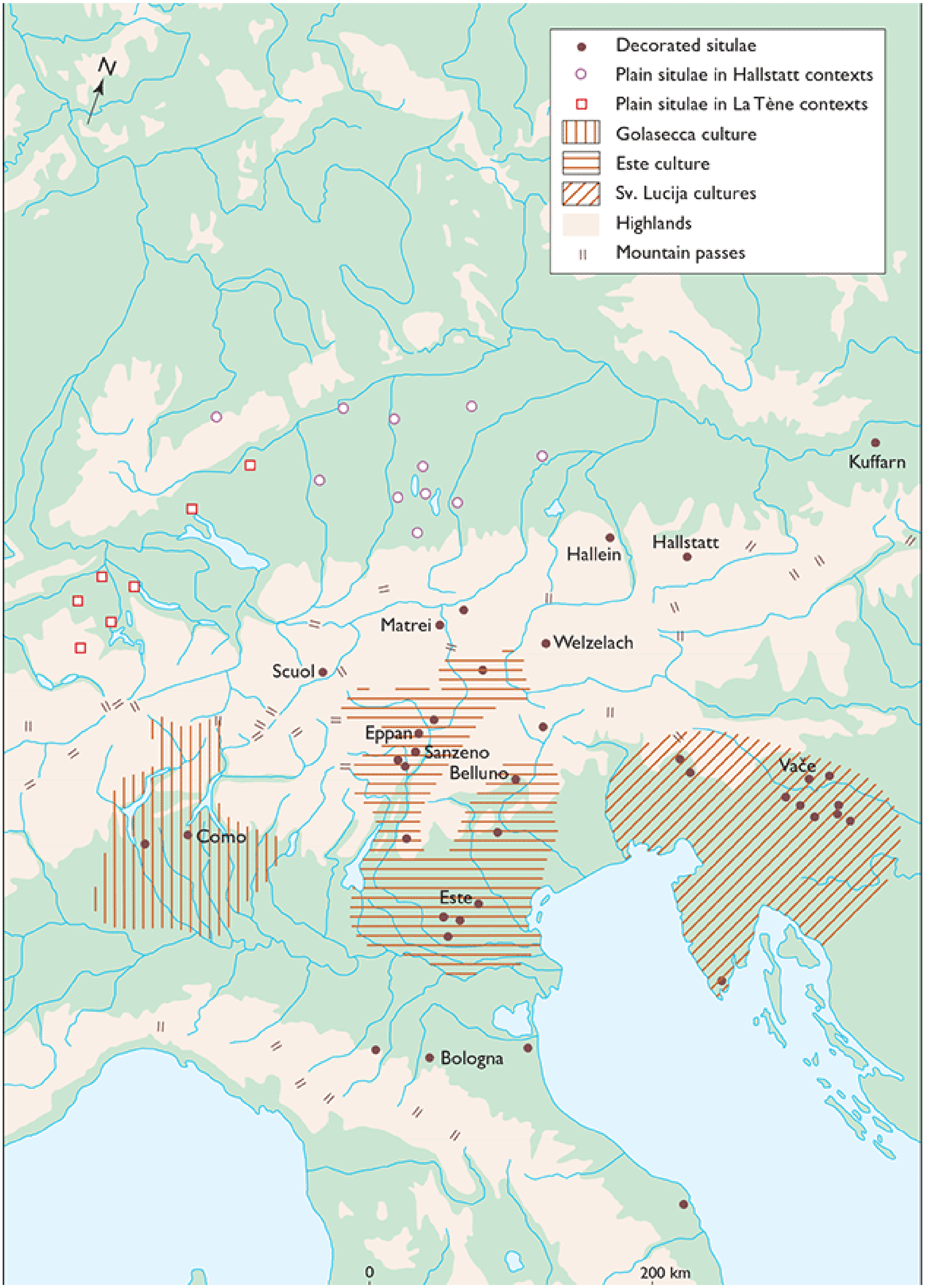
15 Gold. Gold was frequently found in the elite burials of west central Europe in the Hallstatt period. The distribution of gold provides an indication of the extent of the elite zone.


N
Seat of nobility
Rich burials
Major fortified settlements
Other sites
Zone of West Hallstatt chiefdoms
Highland
Mountain passes
Seine
Rhine
Danube
Würzburg
Hohenasperg
Ipf
Nagold
Breisach
Mont Lassois
Heuneburg
Kyberg
Hallstatt
Hellbrunner Berg
Sopron
Velemszentvid
Klein-Klein
Bourges
Britzgyberg
Mont Guérin
Uetilberg
Camp de Chassey
Camp de Château
Châtillon-sur-Font
Schiffenen
Châtillon-sur-Glâne
Montmorot
Stična
Novo Mesto
Como
Sesto Calende
Rhône
Adria
Spina
Bologna
Massalia
ETRURIA
0
200 km

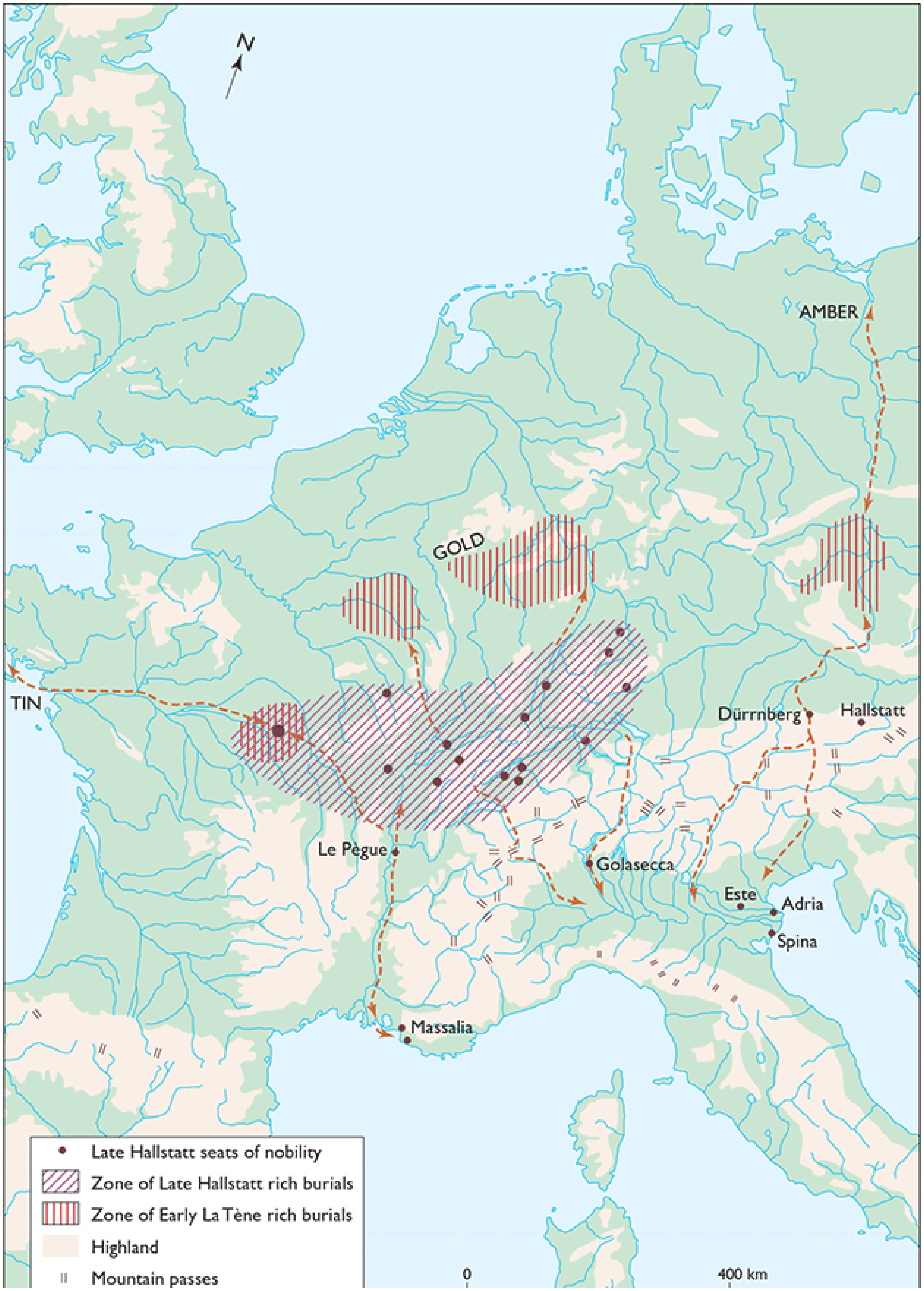
16 Centres of power. It is possible to recognize centres of power in west central Europe that existed during the Late Hallstatt period (c. 600–480 BC). These were invariably focused on strongly fortified hilltops in the vicinity of which rich burials usually clustered. During this period there was some fluctuation in the power of these ‘seats of nobility’ suggesting active, sometimes aggressive, competition. In the eastern Alpine region, while hillforts were built and maintained, there is no evidence of comparably rich burials or of arrays of Mediterranean luxury goods or of gold used in burial contexts.


● Este culture
☐ Northern Italian material in Hallstatt contexts
○ Golasecca culture 9–5 cent. BC
Highland
ıı Mountain passes
N
Bragny
Golasecca
Como
Este
0
400 km

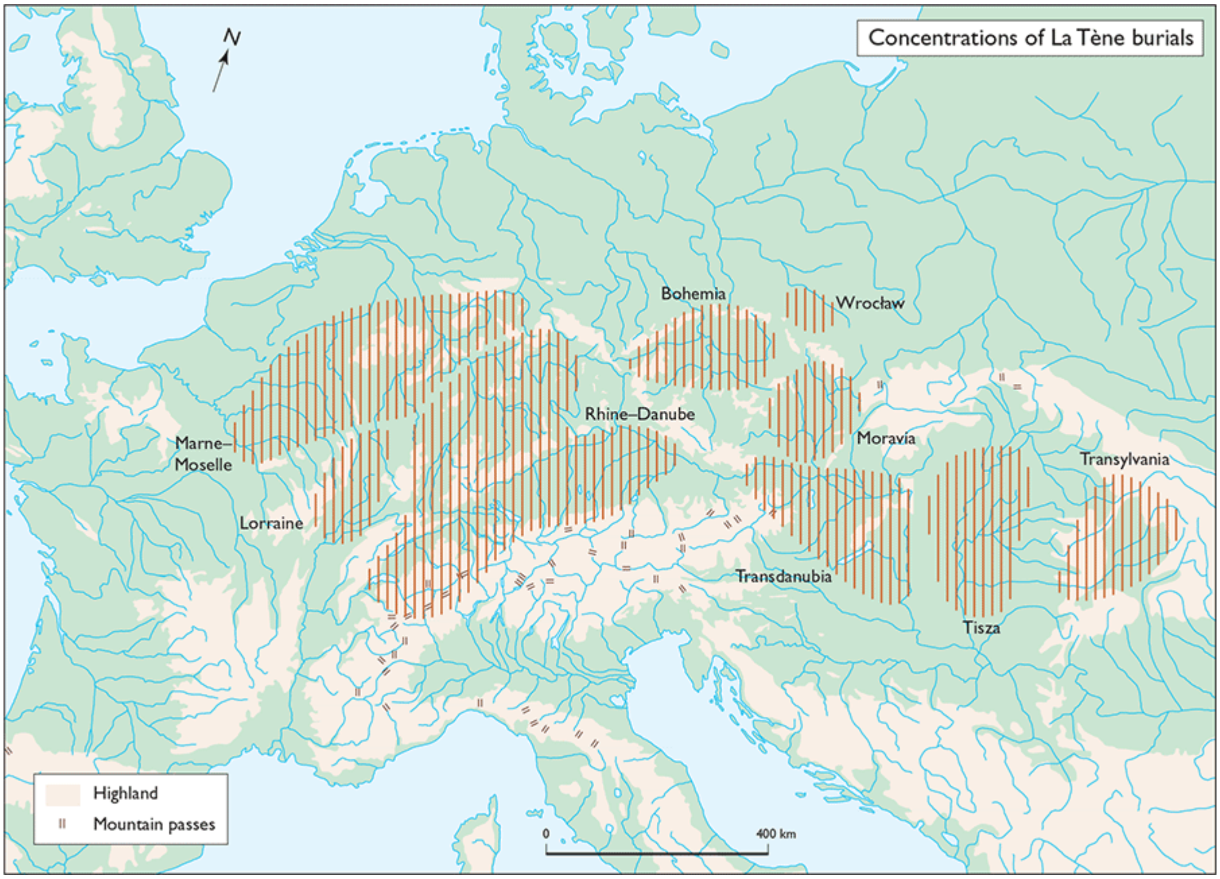
17 Golasecca and Este cultures. The communities who occupied the southern flank of the Alps were in a prime position to control the routes between the Etruscans and the Celtic zone of west central Europe. Two major groups can be identified archaeologically: the Golasecca culture in the west and the Este culture in the east. The distribution of small objects of northern Italian manufacture north of the Alps indicates the principal focus of the trading contacts.


Decorated situlae
Plain situlae in Hallstatt contexts
Plain situlae in La Tène contexts
Golasecca culture
Este culture
Sv. Lucija cultures
Highlands
Mountain passes
N
Kuffarn
Hallein
Hallstatt
Matrei
Welzelach
Scuol
Eppan
Sanzeno
Belluno
Como
Este
Vače
Bologna
0
200 km

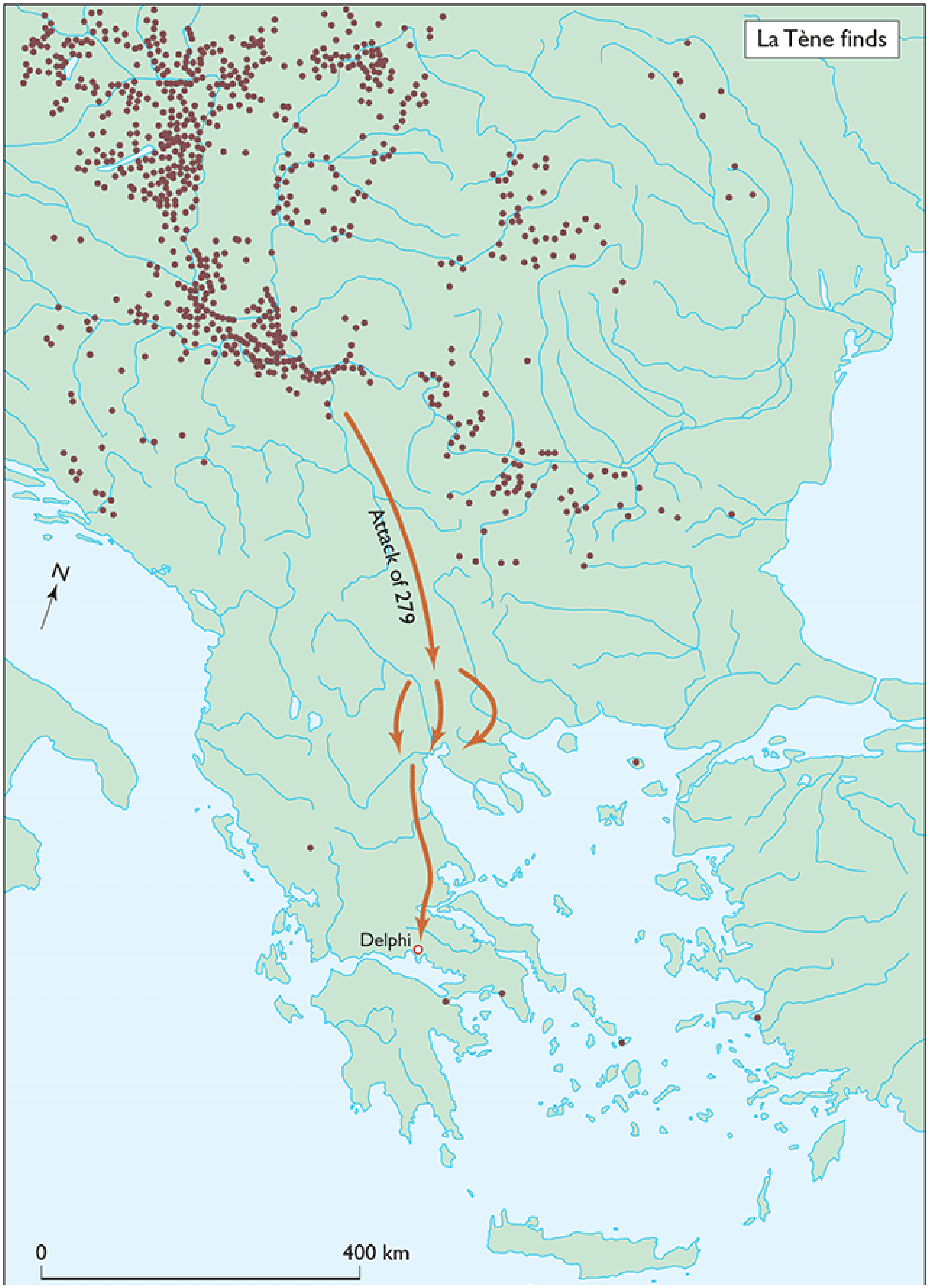
18 Bronze situlae. Bronze situlae (buckets) were extensively used for feasting and in burials. Many of those made in northern Italy and Slovenia were elaborately decorated with figured scenes.

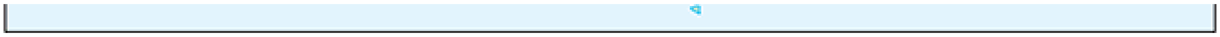

N
AMBER
GOLD
TIN
Dürrnberg
Hallstatt
Le Pègue
Golasecca
Este
Adria
Spina
Massalia
● Late Hallstatt seats of nobility
▨ Zone of Late Hallstatt rich burials
▥ Zone of Early La Tène rich burials
Highland
॥ Mountain passes
0
400 km

19 Europe in the fifth century BC. In the Late Hallstatt period a zone of chiefdoms existed stretching across the northern Alpine zone from the Loire to southern Germany. This zone was in contact with the Mediterranean principally along the Rhône route and through the Alpine passes. By the middle of the fifth century four separate regions around the northern fringes of the former Hallstatt zone had begun to develop rich innovating chiefdoms. Here, particularly in the Marne and Moselle regions, a new art style, characterizing the Early La Tène culture, began to emerge.

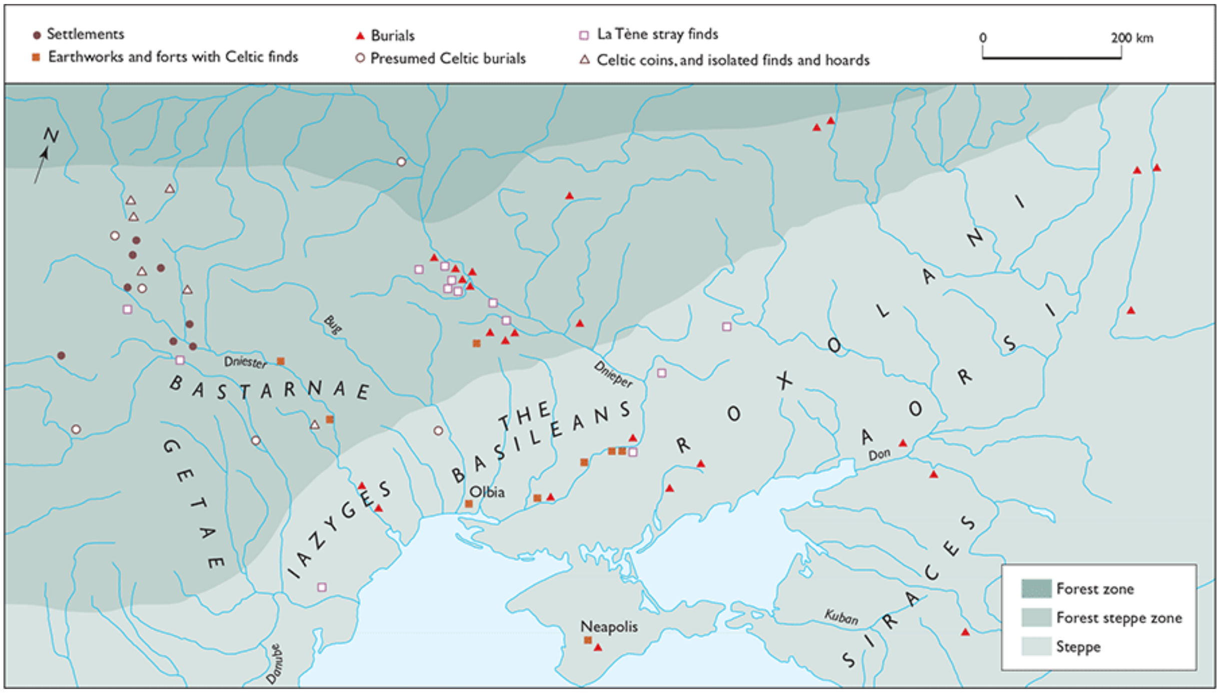

Concentrations of La Tène burials
N
Bohemia
Wrocław
Rhine–Danube
Moravia
Marne–Moselle
Lorraine
Transylvania
Transdanubia
Tisza
Highland
Mountain passes
0
400 km

20 Major regional concentrations of La Tène burials. Burials accompanied by weapons and personal ornaments characteristic of La Tène culture are found across much of middle Europe from the fourth to second centuries BC. A number of regional differences can be recognized.

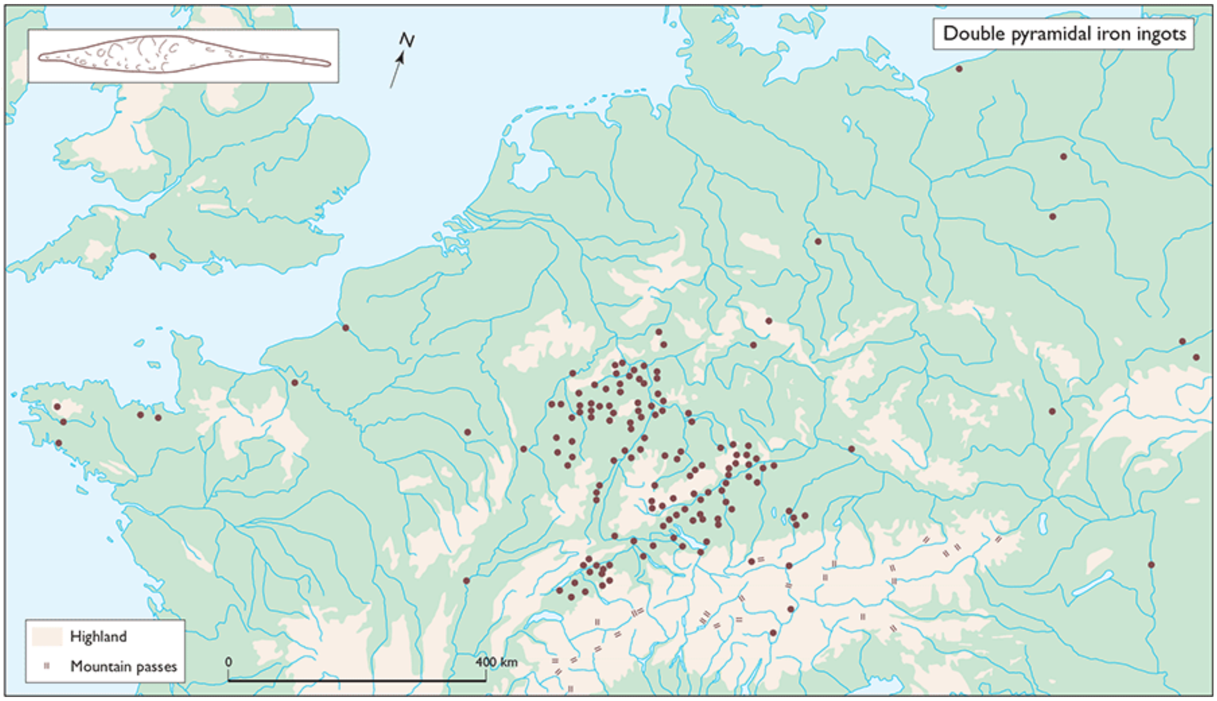

La Tène finds
Attack of 279
Delphi
N
0
400 km



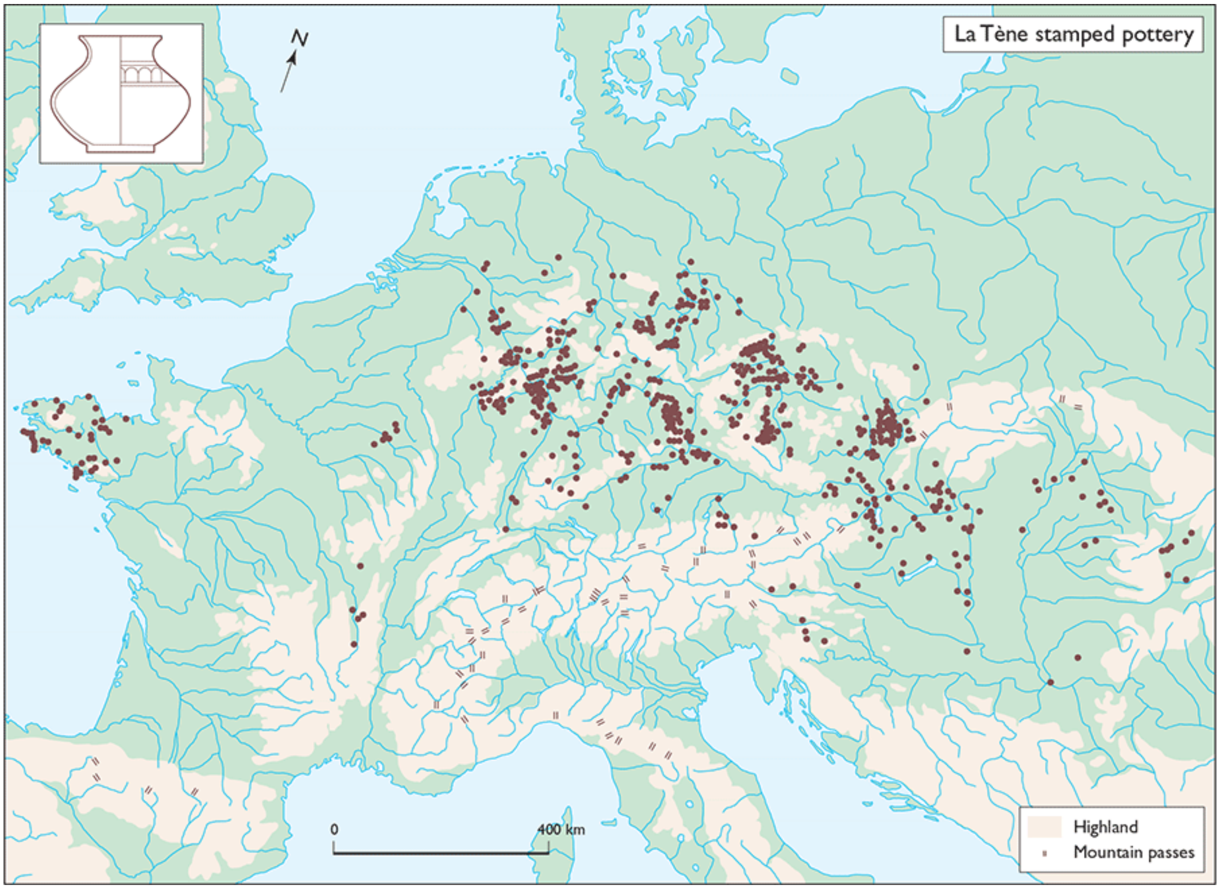
21 La Tène finds in south-eastern Europe. By the beginning of the third century BC the La Tène culture had spread to the Middle and Lower Danube valley, with a particular concentration in the Middle Danube and Sava region. It was probably from here that, in 279, the attack on Delphi was launched. In spite of the size of the raiding force and the disruption which it caused to the Greek states, it is unrecognizable in the archaeological evidence. The map, showing finds of La Tène material, vividly makes the point that major historical events need leave little or no archaeological trace.


● Settlements
■ Earthworks and forts with Celtic finds
▲ Burials
○ Presumed Celtic burials
☐ La Tène stray finds
△ Celtic coins, and isolated finds and hoards
0
200 km
N
Bug
Dniester
Dnieper
Don
Kuban
Danube
BASTARNAE
GETAE
IAZYGES
THE BASILEANS
ROXOLANI
AORSI
SIRACES
Olbia
Neapolis
Forest zone
Forest steppe zone
Steppe

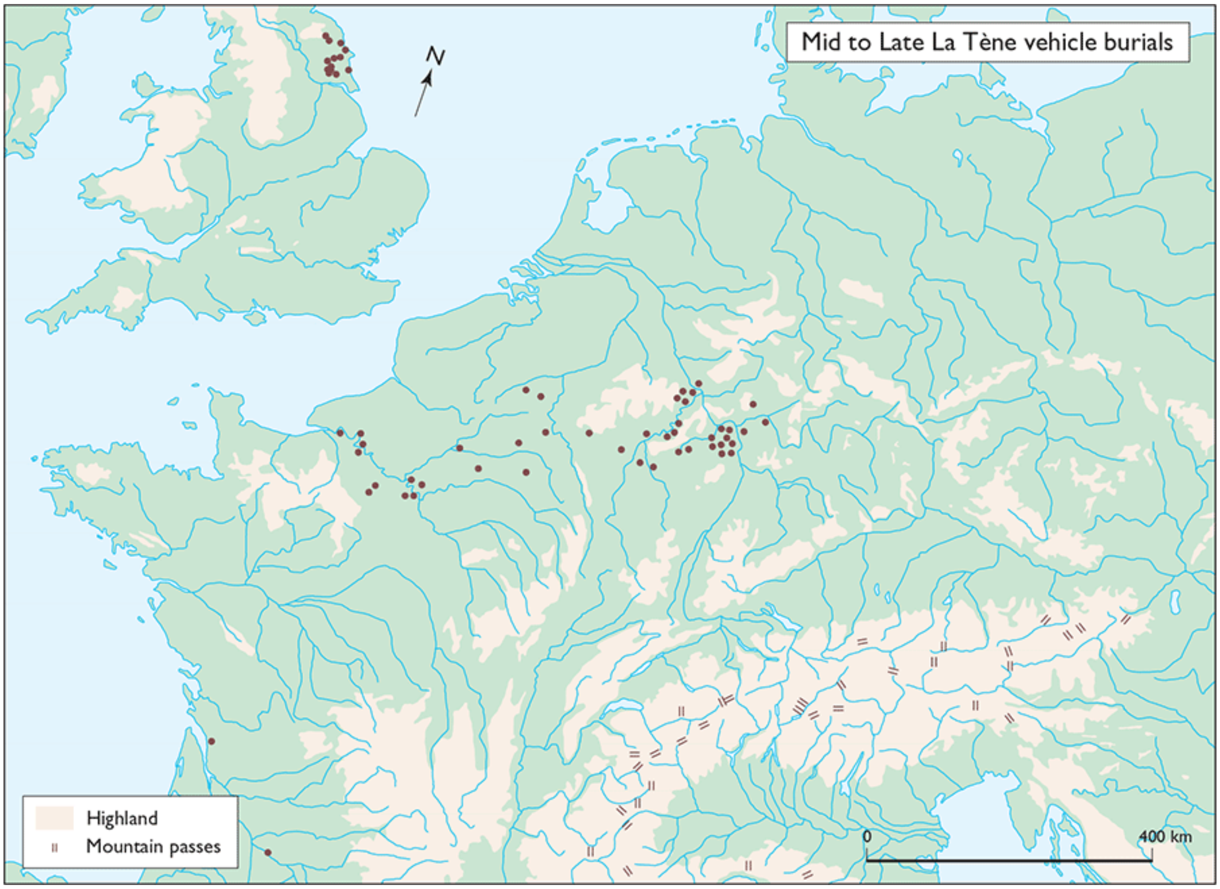
22 Celtic finds in the northern Pontic steppe. In the latter part of the first millennium BC the Pontic steppe was an area with a complex mix of populations among whom there was much mobility. The quantity of La Tène material found, particularly in the west of this region, suggests that some Celtic groups may have moved to settle in Moldova and to raid and serve as mercenaries over a wider area.


Double pyramidal iron ingots
N
Highland
Mountain passes
0
400 km

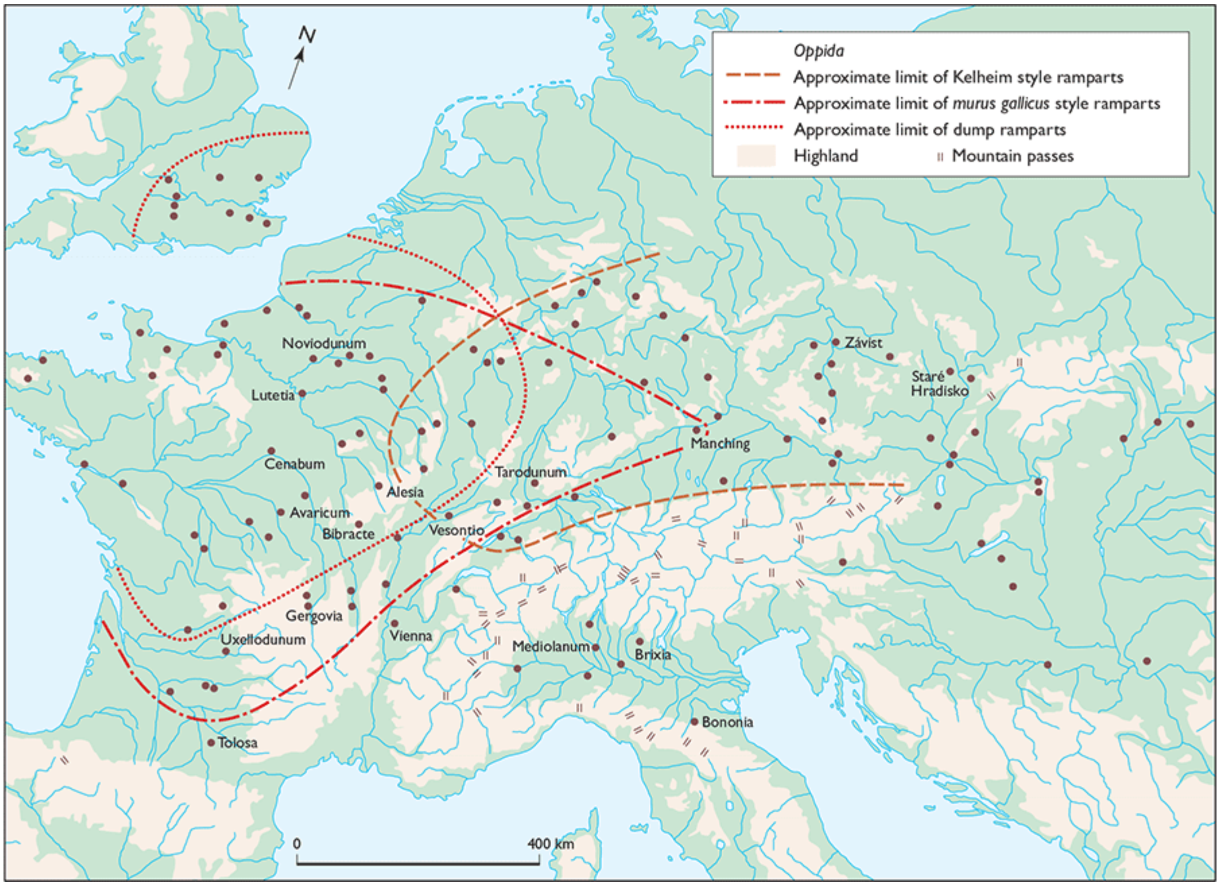
23 Double pyramidal ingots of iron. The production of iron intensified during the second and first centuries BC. Iron was made into ingots of various kinds (of which the double pyramidal form is one) for trade and exchange. By drawing out the ends of the bar into thin rods the smith was physically demonstrating the quality of the iron since impurities would cause visible cracking.


La Tène stamped pottery
N
0
400 km
Highland
Mountain passes

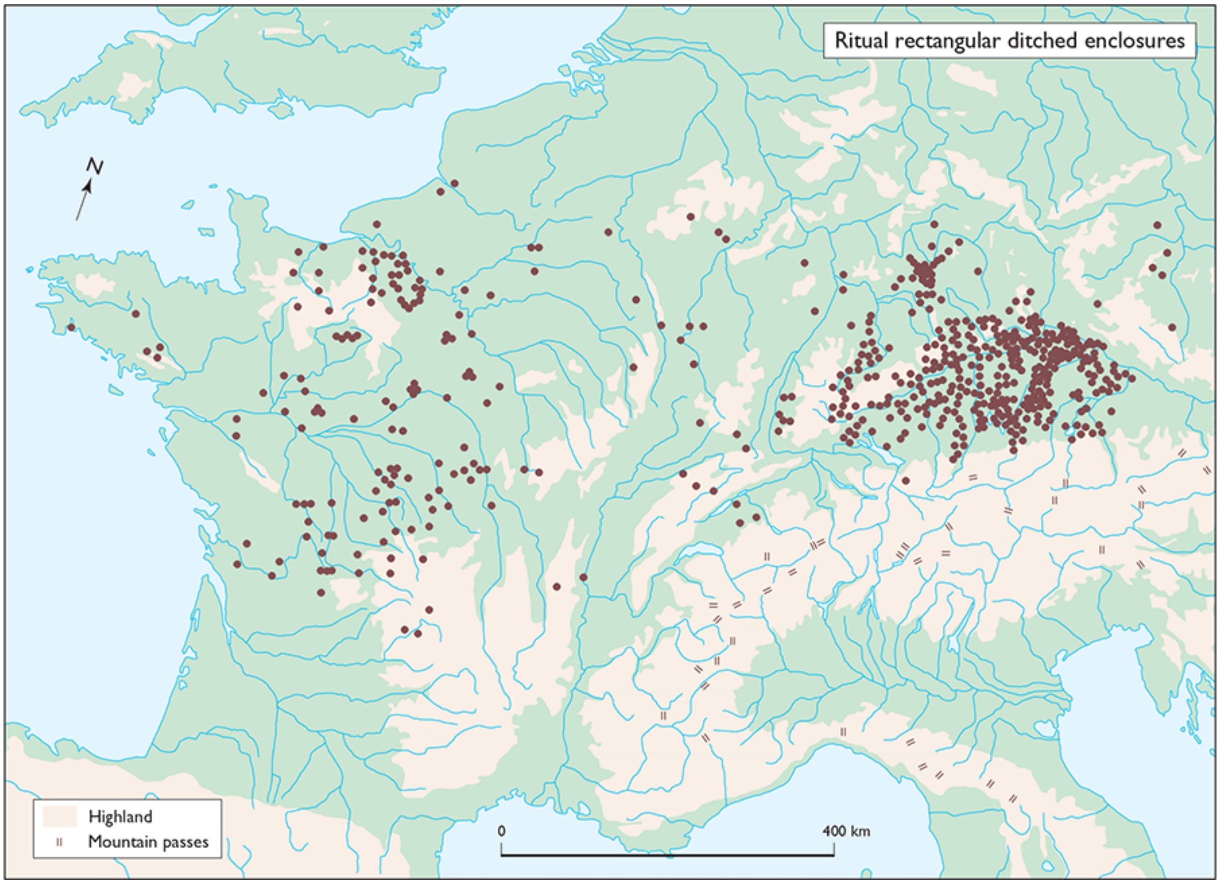
24 La Tène stamped pottery. Pottery with stamped decoration became common throughout middle Europe from the fifth to third centuries BC. The motifs used were probably derived from those decorating contemporary metalwork. In Britain stamped decoration occurs infrequently, but probably not before the second century BC.


Mid to Late La Tène vehicle burials
N
Highland
Mountain passes
0
400 km

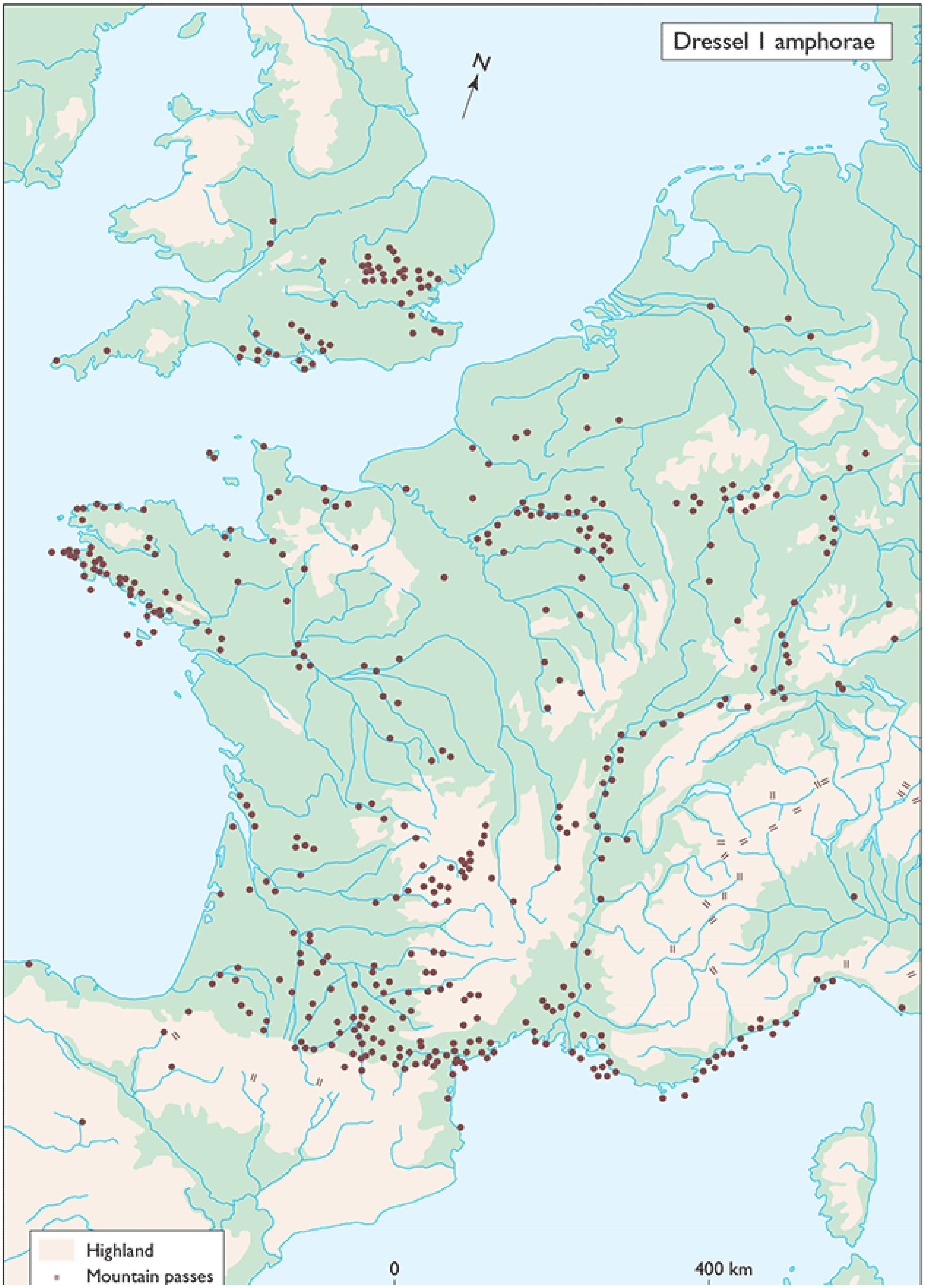
25 Vehicle burials of the Middle and Late La Tène period. Two-wheeled vehicles pulled by a pair of horses were popular in much of the Celtic world. Lightly constructed versions served as war chariots; others were used in the funerary ritual, though only in certain rather restricted areas as the map shows.


N
Oppida
Approximate limit of Kelheim style ramparts
Approximate limit of murus gallicus style ramparts
Approximate limit of dump ramparts
Highland
Mountain passes
Noviodunum
Lutetia
Cenabum
Avaricum
Alesia
Bibracte
Vesontio
Tarodunum
Manching
Závist
Staré
Hradisko
Gergovia
Uxellodunum
Vienna
Mediolanum
Brixia
Bononia
Tolosa
0
400 km

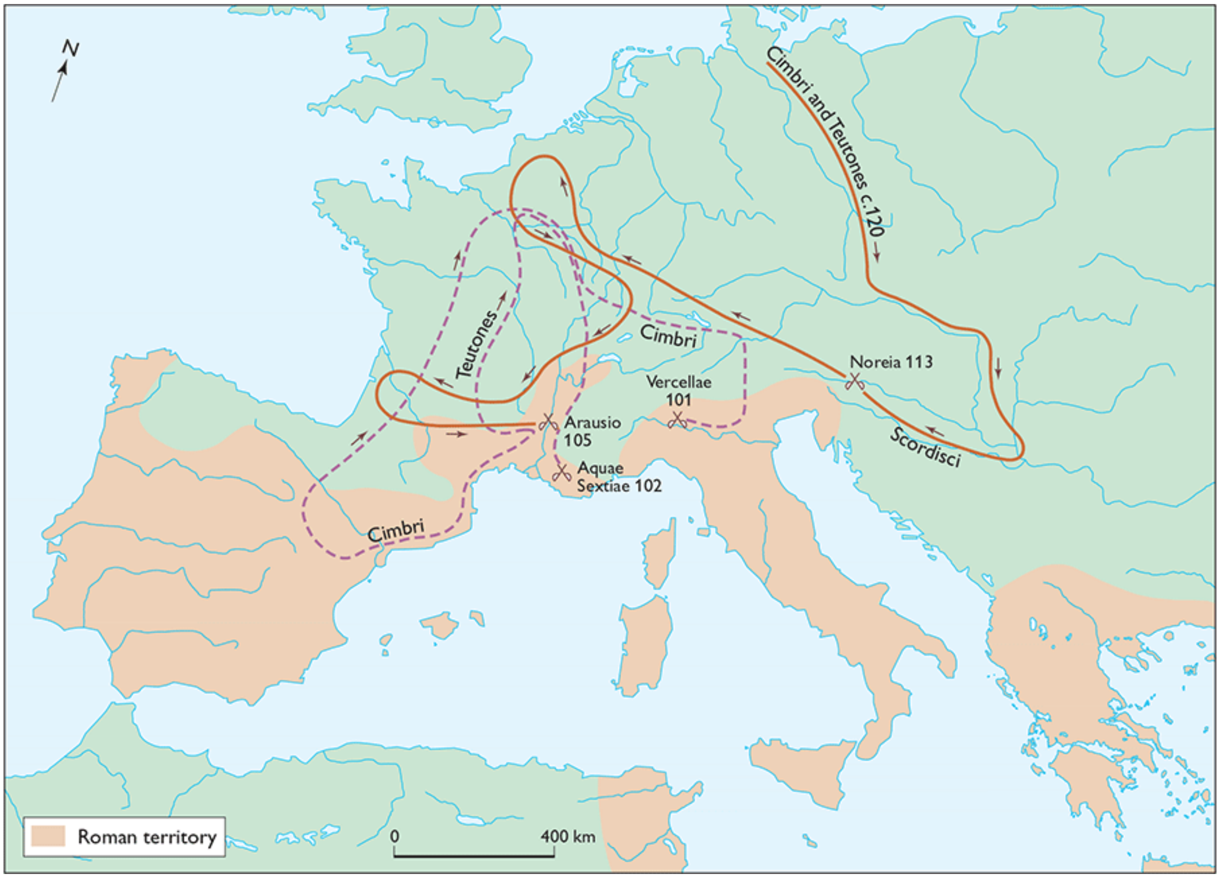
26 *Oppida in Europe.* Large nucleated settlements defended by earthworks, or a combination of earthworks and natural features, developed in the second and first centuries BC in many parts of Europe. They usually commanded crucial positions on major routes or were near rich natural resources. Three broad but overlapping zones can be recognized based on types of fortification style.


Ritual rectangular ditched enclosures
N
Highland
Mountain passes
0
400 km

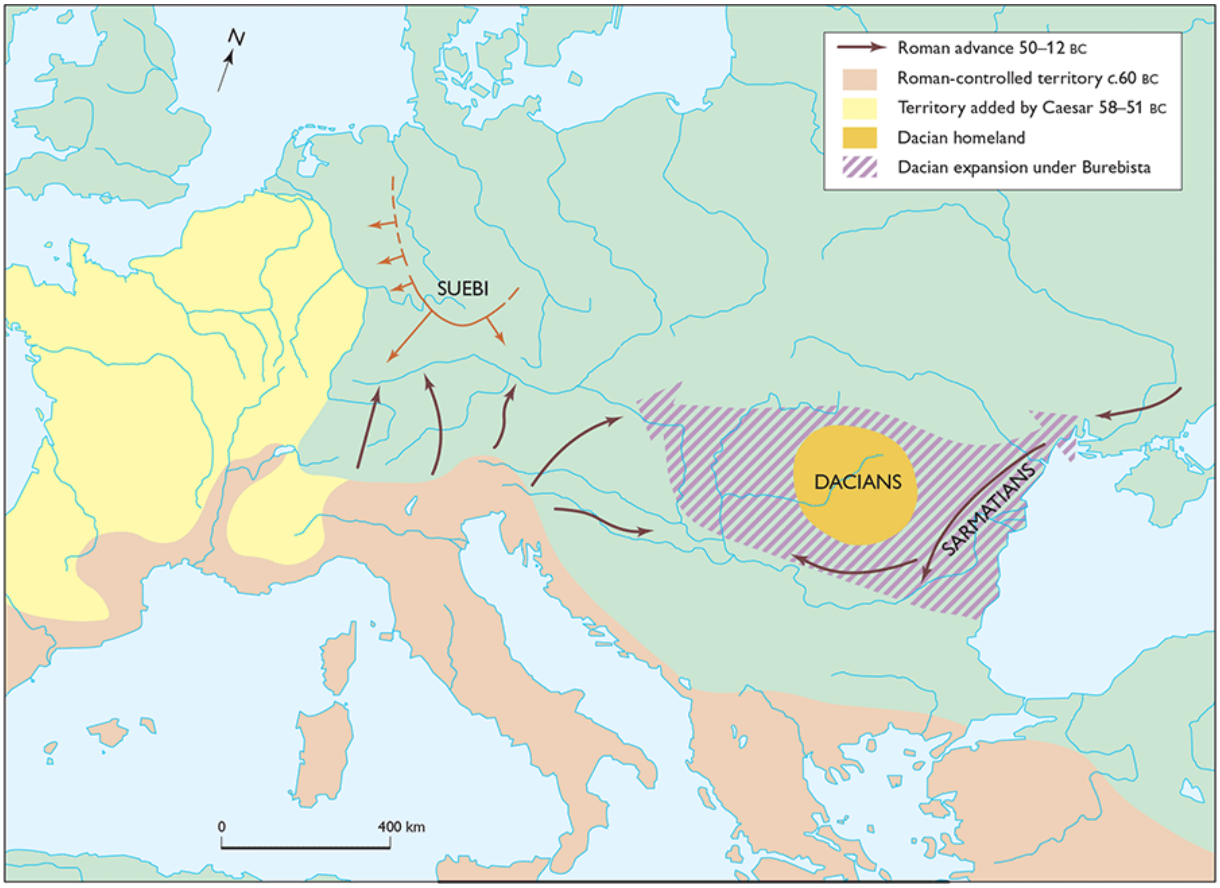
27 Rectangular ditched enclosures of ritual type. One of the most common types of ritual site found in Europe belonging to the second and first centuries BC is the rectangular ditched enclosure, which concentrates in southern Germany and north-western France. Some have shafts inside, others have burials. Little can be deduced of the activities which may have taken place in them.


Dressel 1 amphorae
N
Highland
Mountain passes
0
400 km

28 Dressel 1 amphorae. Amphorae were commonly used to transport wine. After the middle of the second century BC there developed an extensive trade in wine between the producers of northern Italy and the distributors along the southern coast of France who dealt with the Gauls further inland. Two characteristic types of amphorae mapped here, Dressel types 1A and 1B, emphasize the major trade routes in operation between c.150 BC and AD 10. The importance of rivers and the Atlantic as routeways are clearly apparent.


N
Cimbri and Teutones c.120
Noreia 113
Cimbri
Vercellae
101
Teutones
Arausio
105
Aquae
Sextiae 102
Scordisci
Cimbri
Roman territory
0
400 km

29 The movements of the Cimbri and Teutones. The migration of two northern tribes, the Cimbri and the Teutones, caused much disruption in Europe between c.114 and 101 BC. Travelling so far and over such a long period, these migrating groups likely gathered followers as they progressed. After beating Roman armies on several occasions, they were eventually defeated by Marius in 102 and 101, removing what was widely perceived to be a serious threat to Rome itself.


N
Roman advance 50–12 BC
Roman-controlled territory c.60 BC
Territory added by Caesar 58–51 BC
Dacian homeland
Dacian expansion under Burebista
SUEBI
DACIANS
SARMATIANS
0
400 km

30 Europe in the middle of the first century BC. The Celtic tribes of Europe were squeezed between three forces: the Dacians in the east, the

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Maps 1–30
The information incorporated in the maps comes from a wide variety of sources too numerous to mention individually. One very important source is a paper by W. Kimmig, ‘Die Griechische kolonisation im westlichen mittelmeergebeit und ihre wirkung auf die landschaften des Westlichen Mitteleuropa’, *Jahrbuch des Rö misch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums Mainz* 30 (1983), 5–78. The paper is illustrated with a large number of meticulously researched distribution maps. Information from some of these maps has been used to compile Maps 1–5, 9–18 and has contributed to others. Other maps which rely largely on one source are: **8** C. Pare, ‘Ein zweites Fürstengrab von Apremont “(La Motte aux Fées)”’ (Arr. Vesoul, Dép Haute Saône)’, *Jahrbuch des Rö misch - Germanischen Zentralmuseums Mainz* 36 (1989), 411–72, abb.19; **21** F. Maier, ‘Keltische Altertümer in Grechenland’, *Germania* 51 (1973), 459–77, abb 1; **23** W. Kimmig and G. Gersbach, ‘Die Grabungen auf der Heuneburg 1966–1969’ *Germania* 49 (1971), 21–91, taf 7 (after O. Kleemann); **25** K N. Roymans, *Tribal Societies in Northern Gaul: an Anthropological Perspective* (Amersterdam, 1990), fig. 9.15; **27** K. Schwarz, ‘Spätkeltrische Viereckschauzen’, *Jahresb Ericht Bayerischen Bodenkmalpfleye* (1960), 7–41; **28** A. Fitzpatrick, ‘The distribution of Dressel 1 amphorae in North-west Europe’, *Oxford Journal of Archaeology* 4 (1985), 305–40, fig. 3.

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Picture Research by Sandra Assersohn

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